

# THE INDIAN TANGLE

*by*

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*Foreword by*

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## FOREWORD

BY THE RT. HON. EARL WINTERTON, P.C., M.P.

**M**Y friend, Sir Albion Banerji, writes on Indian Constitutional problems and difficulties from an abundance of knowledge gained in loyal and devoted service to the King-Emperor and India.

With many of the conclusions which he reaches I differ, as will others of his readers, but no one can deny that he presents his case with fairness and moderation.

Too few people, both in India and Great Britain, realize the extent to which arguments for and against this or that solution of the problems of Indian governance "cancel each other out," to use a convenient modern slang term. Sir Albion shows some of the difficulties arising from conditions in which the contentions for and against a particular course are so nearly balanced.

## PREFACE

**S**INCE the appointment of the Simon Commission at the close of 1927 many books have been written on the Indian situation. Why then another? In the constantly changing panorama of Indian politics in recent years, public attention has been directed chiefly to a few of the important events that will go to make history. Yet, writers have often been concerned with the temporary and sometimes sensational situation of the moment. With a few honourable exceptions, the views presented have been frequently partisan, representing sectional interests in India itself or the recognized difference of opinion as to British policy manifest in the pronouncements of Conservative, Liberal and Labour party leaders, speakers or writers from time to time. Even to-day there is no general agreement amongst them.

consideration the proposals of His Majesty's Government, known as the White Paper. These proposals have aroused controversy both in England and in India. Moreover, the Untouchability question and the part played by Mr. Gandhi in regard to Temple entry have created new difficulties.

The Indian tangle has been one of the problems of history, and yet history gives us little scope to find a clue. From the pre-historic Aryan invasion which established a Hindu system of polity and founded kingdoms and dynasties lasting more than 2500 years, through the periods in which Mogul Rule flourished and the European nations competed to establish supremacy over India, and finally to the consolidation of British rule and the establishment of peace and order amongst India's teeming millions, Indian problems have presented intricate questions for solution in the fields of sociology, constitutional doctrine, political theory and economy. To the credit of Great Britain she has succeeded in the 150 years of her connection with India in unravelling at least some of the knots of the Indian tangle ; but at the same time has put in a few knots of her own. The

net result is that the tangle is to-day more complicated than ever before.

In dealing with this never-ending Indian Problem, which has at every successive stage presented new conundrums, I claim no special aptitude.

Not being a politician but having served in practical administration in various parts of British India and the Indian States for a period of thirty-five years, I possess, however, some experience of the difficulties. I hope to present a picture to my readers which may help them to get a just perspective.

Since relinquishing my last appointment in India as Foreign and Political Minister of Kashmir, I have devoted the whole of my leisure to travelling and writing. I have addressed Rotary Clubs, and religious, educational and political organizations, irrespective of denomination or party in England. I have spoken often at gatherings under the auspices of the All Peoples' Association and other international organizations in foreign countries, particularly in Sweden, Finland, Germany and Czecho-Slovakia on Indian problems, mainly from the cultural and economic points of view.

From October '1929 'to January 1932 I edited a quarterly journal, *Indian Affairs*, which was entirely under my own direction and financial responsibility. I saw both the necessity for India's continued connection with England to ensure her development, and for presenting every shade of Indian thought to those in Europe and America and specially in the United Kingdom, who take a genuine interest in the advance of India in the path of full responsible government and in all her endeavours in the field of science, literature, art, industries, social and civic welfare. At a time when the need was greatest for the diffusion of correct ideas about India, I have done what I could to help in the task of promoting a better understanding about my country and its problems.

In my travels I have noticed considerable increase of interest in Indian questions both in America and on the Continent. Apart from the political issues, the interest has largely centred on India's social and religious problems which my family traditions and my experiences in public service enable me to discuss with some understanding. Some English readers may view with indifference

this attempt to untie a few of the knots, for many of those who in this country take a keen interest in the Indian question to-day, look at the matter as it affects them personally and their successors in enjoyment of existing privileges. Those who take a dispassionate view are severely handicapped by inadequate information. Too often when they take up a book to satisfy their desire for knowledge they find only a particular point of view emphasized, and they see the arguments they have read disputed, perhaps in the next book they read though it may be written by an authority no less competent to deal with Indian problems.

The Indian tangle to-day is receiving world-wide attention because of its attractiveness and its alluring possibilities. These I have attempted to explain looking well into the future. In the life of nations, time has to be measured in centuries not in decades. Believing, as I do, that India will wield a mighty influence in a new world still in the making if she conserves and not destroys her spiritual force and inspiration, I have attempted in the following pages to indicate the dangers lying in the path towards the



# THE INDIAN TANGLE

## CHAPTER I

### CHIEF FEATURES OF THE TANGLE

**I**NDIAN problems are like the colouring of Eastern sunrise and sunset : neither dull nor grey, but vivid gold and crimson, not unmixed with thunder and lightning. Often the vision is highly coloured, and at times supercharged with mist. No two books on India approach her many questions from the same point, nor deal with them as if seen through the same glasses. Most Western students, even if they have been in India, study them from afar. Though they may be detached and theoretically impartial, such writers err through lack of intimate knowledge of the facts, which often lie hidden in a superficial mass of historic fiction, hearsay and tradition, and are obscured by want of a proper understanding of the East by the West.

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## CHAPTER I

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The problems of India may be described as those of Middle Asia, of which India forms the central pendulum. The lure of the East is the lure of India, the magnet which drew the most famous conquerors and the most ambitious nations of the earth during a period of 2500 years. Her problems have to be understood and realized, with due regard to the possibility of history repeating itself in the future.

We all know that India has never been a homogeneous country, inhabited by a people or group of peoples allied together by religion, language or a common race origin. Ancient geographical names, such as Indus, Pancha Ab, Ajjodha, Bangala, Dravidia, Karnataka, Kerala, Oorya, Chola, Pandya, Maharastra, indicate the diversified origin of the present division of provinces and tracts, chiefly ethnographical in character, through which arose the dynastic influence of the different ruling houses. Some of these now remain as survivals, the majority as mere anachronisms.

India is geographically one country by reason of British rule. In the first part of the 150 years' existence of that rule there was consolidation of British power and authority over the whole length and breadth of the sub-continent. There is, however, no uniformity

at present amongst the peoples of India and the various communities, in the growth of national life or in the standard of progress reached in social and educational movements. Some like the Brahmo Samajists and Parsees are almost westernized, while the bulk of the Hindu and Moslem populations still follow their old traditions hallowed by centuries of usage. The tribal population outside these two communities are still primitive, and have no conception of politics or nationalism in any shape or form. It was this diversity, chiefly due to religion, language and custom, which made the British Empire builders follow an elastic method of administration suitable to each province or tract, tribe or community. Standardization and uniformity are commonly accepted principles of democracy but bureaucracy, by which India has till lately been governed, did leave the people freedom to practise and follow their own special group traditions and culture.

This outline picture may create bewilderment in the minds of the uninformed at the outset. It may be asked, "Can any set of problems be considered generically as Indian; can they be discussed as having application all over the country?" I think it would be a mistake to emphasize this aspect of the

question, because there is an opposite side which demands the closest scrutiny and sympathetic examination.

For instance, the English language has forged a link between the intelligentsia of the various races, sects and clans who could not otherwise have a common medium of expression. Then, again, under the promise given by Queen Victoria in her great proclamation of 1858 there has been religious tolerance and a policy of strict religious neutrality. All castes and creeds have enjoyed the fullest freedom in the assurance of protection to all in an impartial manner by Government. While in a sense perpetuating sectarian differences of castes and creed within their narrow spheres, and even discouraging social and civic reform amongst the people this policy did create a spirit of nationality and a bond of union, as under it people of various communities and following different religions could fraternize and live in amicable relations.

With these helpful conditions the diversity and want of uniformity in British India and the States gradually became less marked until a time came when the national consciousness of the whole country began to be articulate. Hence, however some thinkers may charac-

terize the various movements and institutions that came into existence as exotic growths, the position in India to-day is entirely the outcome of British rule.

The late Sir Herbert Risley divided the people of the Indian Empire into seven main physical types. The areas occupied by these various types do not admit of being separated as sharply as may be shown on the ethnographical map. Indeed, the foreigner travelling through the length and breadth of India will find it difficult to draw in his mind a line which divides one type from another. This degree of merging may reasonably be attributed to the facilities afforded by settled government under British rule, with its security for life and property, movement of population and some amount of fusion of races.

It is broadly true that the two main divisions of India are Hindu and Mahomedan, in spite of the scientific division of types under so many heads. The wonderful power of conservation which was wielded by those who laid the foundations of Hindu religion and social organization brought together in one fold, and at one stroke of the pen, as it were, a very large group of peoples, ethnologically divided and also different in race-origin,

under the four caste divisions of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. Further, a large proportion of the Mahomedan population has, in the last few centuries, been converted by force to that faith, but originally belonged to the Hindu social system.

Some 68 per cent of the population of 353 million comprises the Indo-Aryan group, more or less allied together by the Hindu social organization, established 2000 years ago. The Semitic group, in which the Mahomedans predominate, consist of about 22 per cent. There are 13 principal languages spread over the Indian Empire, and many of the provinces are divided more or less on a linguistic basis. The masses are mostly illiterate for only some 23 millions of the population are able to read and write. From these main features, the principal factors which are influencing the social, political and economic life of India as a whole can be visualized. To-day the bonds of a common nationhood are growing rapidly in spite of differences of caste, language and religion. The causes are many: communications due to the extension of railways, roads and canals, the mobile transport of food grains and other produce from one part of India to another, even during the times of famine; the extensive

medical aid afforded by numerous hospitals and dispensaries under European and Indian medical men and women ; and the spread of education in all grades through the universities, high-schools and middle and primary schools.

The present-day problems of India are chiefly economic, religious and social. At root they have their origin in a diversity of religion, race origin, and social customs, which has very little connection with politics or government. Being essentially an agricultural country, most of the disabilities under which India is labouring at the present are of rural origin. It is not reasonable to argue that the miserable lot of the teeming masses is due to any neglect on the part of British rule. The standard of living and the standard of wages have risen considerably, though not to the extent that could be wished, for they are still very low, judged by Western standards. A solidarity of national interests has been brought into existence which was impossible without the comprehensive and unifying policy of British rule. The revenue administration of British India has, during the past half-century or more, attempted to fix the assessment on land paid to Government on an equitable basis although it has to be



admitted that, in isolated instances, assessments have been fixed, and at times have been revised, rather at an excessive rate or increase. Among the pressing economic questions of to-day are how to increase agricultural production, and how to familiarize the cultivator with modern methods of husbandry; how to extend irrigation, especially in tracts which suffer from precarious rainfall; how to increase facilities for prompt marketing; and how to liberate the ryot (cultivator) from the tyranny of the middle-men and the money-lender. It is, however, hard to deny that most of the economic evils to be faced are due to climate or to social customs.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture, under the chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow, reporting in 1928 made comprehensive recommendations in regard to all these matters. No great progress has been made, however, in giving agricultural instructions (much neglected in the administration of British India, though adopted in some of the Indian States) to the rural population on a practical basis, and in decentralizing the work of agricultural development and improvement from the Governments to the districts and sub-districts. Large Govern-

ment departments and institutions cost much money and have little effect on the agricultural position of the population, who are, for the most part, illiterate and conservative. The revenue derived from administrative units ought to bear the cost of agricultural improvement, instruction, demonstration, etc., which might be calculated on a percentage of revenue receipts therefrom. Then only will there be the necessary initiative and sense of responsibility, and also close contact in all matters affecting agricultural policy. Moreover this plan would remove the danger of reduction of grants during periods of financial stringency. Lastly, agricultural indebtedness has to be dealt with by drastic legislation, as in the State of Kashmir a few years ago.

It is a significant fact that little more than 1 per cent of the population are occupied in organized industries. Textiles, wood and building industries are the main sub-division under which this population can be classified. Technical education has yet to be developed in all grades, and so far has not received sufficient attention, either from the Government or the people. The result is that the educated classes, for the most part, follow the liberal arts. They comprise about five

millions out of the whole population of India. It is impossible to absorb in the liberal arts all the products of university education which are swelling in number from year to year. Consequently the number of unemployed educated young men throughout the country has increased to an alarming extent during the last 20 years.

The average earnings per head of the population in India was estimated in Lord Curzon's time to be about £2 per annum. It may be about double that figure to-day, but, even on that assumption, it is safe to assert that the economic position of the people of India, as compared to most other countries, is lamentably low, and even viewed with reference to the low standard of living due to fewer wants and necessities, is on the verge of a struggle between life and death. If the Government have done little the people have done less, for India is a sad example of the tyranny of class capitalism of the worst type.

As regards the working classes, it has been computed that the average daily wage does not exceed a shilling, and there are many in domestic service and allied work getting only 3½d. per day. Labour conditions in India, even taking the low standard of living

and the standard of necessary requirements for food, clothing, housing, etc., are most unsatisfactory. Indian capitalists are not altogether free from blame, in regard to their treatment of labour. The large industries in urban areas often ignore the fundamental duties that devolve upon them as employers of labour, such as textile, jute, iron, steel and mining. Hence we see beginnings in India of a serious conflict between capital and labour. The Royal Commission, appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. J. H. Whitley, to inquire into the labour conditions of India, was a move in the right direction, and produced in 1931 a valuable report. But commissions do not make prosperity any more than a single swallow makes a summer.

Unfortunately, as in some other countries, the economic problems of India are often confused with the political issue both by the Government and the people. Every economic question is discussed from the political point of view and it impinges on grave trade issues as between British and Indian interests, which have to be reconciled by the future Indian Government, with due regard to the economic necessities of the Indian Empire, including the States. Why is it that.

to day Great Britain supplies only one-half of Indian imports and purchases only about one fourth of her exports ? In this connection it may be pointed out that Lord Snowden, when Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1929, suggested the possibility of unemployment in Great Britain diminishing to a large extent if the bulk of the Indian population were able to maintain a slightly better standard of living. The question arises how far a higher standard of living would necessarily result in a large increase in the import of goods from England, or secure for the British manufacturers additional work and expansion of industries in fair competition with other foreign countries. To day India is securing a large proportion of her requirements from European countries other than England and from Japan as the cheaper markets. There is, however, the need for India to be able to find through the establishment of industries all that she needs if she has the raw materials to produce them. This resulting conflict of interest between England and India can be met with equanimity if the principle of give and take is followed. India needs greater economic freedom within her own borders and control over railway policy and coastal shipping, also power to

withdraw restrictions which often prevent the transport of goods from the seat of production to the harbours and overseas markets, and for consumption within the country in the markets of India itself. The tariff question, as well as the question of free trade within the Empire, also raises very grave issues, some of which are only partially solved in the recent Ottawa agreements.

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION AND POLITICS

**T**HOUGH there is an underlying spirit of unity amongst the 270 millions Hindus, as against 79 millions of Mahomedans, it would be foolish to minimize the divergence of outlook in the religious, domestic and civic spheres, in the various groups even amongst the Hindus. The bitterness so strongly in evidence to-day is attributed by certain politicians to British rule, which they characterize as being based on the principle "Divide et impera." Politically, until reforms of a democratic nature were first introduced about two decades ago, Hindus and Moslems lived amicably both in country and in town, without much friction. When the higher appointments were thrown open to Indians and democratic institutions were established for the management of local affairs in districts and provinces there came the tug-of-war for the loaves and fishes of the State. This necessitated a policy on

the part of the British Government of placating the minorities and giving opportunities to all backward communities to share in the administration of the country.

The religious and social differences are of a deeper origin. Take the Hindus for instance. They are divided not only under the four main caste divisions, but even amongst these into numerous separate sects and communities following different rituals and worshipping in different temples. A list of 2300 different castes was once drawn up when a systematic classification was attempted.

The non-Brahmin movement which originated with Dr. T. M. Nair in Madras in 1918 was no doubt political in character, for it was directed against the Brahmin monopoly of culture, resulting in the monopoly of influence in the sphere of Government. Dr. Nair, a personal friend of mine, died in London during the discussions of the Montford reforms in 1919. He openly avowed that he would not care if the forces let loose by his movement destroyed the very foundations of the Hindu society. As a result of this movement, the Justice party came into existence in Madras and whereas at one time the positions of influence were held entirely by Brahmins, in recent years owing to the



activities of the Justice party we have had a succession of ministries under the dyarchical system in that Presidency with a majority of non-Brahmins. The non-Brahmin agitation spread far and wide. In the Mysore State, owing to the just and benevolent policy of the present Maharajah, there was no sharp cleavage between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins, for his Government gave not only opportunities to the backward communities to rise to the highest positions, but also special educational facilities to them to compete on equal terms with the Brahmins. Nevertheless, the non-Brahmins organized themselves and even went in a deputation to His Highness the Maharajah in 1918 to present an address asking for special favours. His Highness in reply said :

“ It has always been my earnest desire to see all classes of my subjects represented in just proportion in public service. The preponderance of the Brahmins in the Government service is due to inevitable causes, and I feel convinced that time and the spread of education and enlightenment will gradually remove the inequality of which you rightly complain. At the same time I must tell you that it is far from my desire that any community should in any way be penalized on account of its caste simply because it has

worked hard and utilized fully the opportunities for advancement which are open to all my subjects. For I believe I have in the Brahmin community as loyal subjects as any among my people. Nor can I for a moment forget the eminent services rendered in the past and still being rendered to my House and State by the representatives of that gifted community. My ambition is to pursue a righteous policy, as between various castes and communities in the State, neither unduly favouring nor supressing any community but trying to uplift them all for the permanent good of the State.

“My Government is using its utmost endeavours to encourage backward classes in the State and you may rest assured that this policy of affording special facilities and encouragement to all communities who are lagging behind in the race of progress will be steadily pursued in future even more than it has been in the past.”

But the Maharajah did not stop there. He appointed a special committee with his Chief Justice (Sir Leslie Miller) as President to go into the whole question of the representation of all the communities in the State service. As the result of their deliberations, he promulgated an order to ensure a larger percentage of appointments to the backward communities and laid down that every effort should

be made to raise the percentage to 50 during a period of seven years. This showed that there was disparity as regards patronage to Government appointments, for the members of the backward communities formed the majority of the population in the State. As Diwan I discovered many subterfuges, practised by the privileged classes to defeat this policy of Government.

It is well known that the Moslems have been repeatedly urging certain safeguards in regard to Government appointments and to their representation in the provincial and central executives. The conflict lies between the hard and fast rule of efficiency and the more flexible and just policy of providing opportunities for the less advanced sections of the people by making the admission tests for them less stringent. This is not a social or religious question, but a political problem, which can only be solved by a provision in the future Constitution of India, similar to that made in the Constitution of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia which I quote :

“Article 128 : Protection of national, religious and racial minorities.

1. All citizens shall be in all respects equal before the law and shall enjoy the same

political rights without distinction of race, language or religion.

2. Difference of religion, creed, faith or language shall not prejudice any citizen in any way, within the limits laid down by general laws, particularly in regard to public employment, office or honours and to the exercise of any trade or calling."

These provisions, however, refer chiefly to political rights, and such a solution will not cover the whole ground, for religious festivals, processions and practices constitute the everyday life of an Indian, irrespective of caste or creed. Differences of religion cannot be forgotten in a country where religion is the heart and soul of the people and symbolized everywhere by its temples and its mosques. It has sacred associations in forms and emblems, rituals and ceremonies, all so diverse that without neutrality in the common government of the country which has been enjoyed since 1858, there would be veritable chaos through a clash of ideals and the methods employed to practise them.

The Brahmo Samaj movement started a century ago by Rajah Mohun Roy is an eclectic faith in which the main principles of all religions are embodied. The doctrine appeals to the intellectuals and is not suitable

for the masses. It practised social service, aiming at the abolition of the Hindu caste system, and was instrumental in securing the first social legislation legalizing marriage between different castes under the Civil Marriage Act of 1872. In spite of violent orthodox opposition, the movement emancipated young India from the fetters of caste and the prejudices and superstitions of idolatry, as well as from the ban on foreign travel. The movement served its purpose and is a notable instance of indigenous effort towards social reform amongst the Hindus who have, under a decayed system, been steeped in prejudice and superstition. Most of the pioneers in the field of education and politics came from this movement and even the Indian National Congress in its early days included some of the best representatives of the Brahmo Samaj.

The movement, however, is now practically dead; the gospel of religious and social equality and tolerance which it preached has now been forgotten. There is more religious intolerance to-day than there was half a century ago, and even amongst Hindus many sects and sub-sects have sprung up for the first time in the history of the Hindu religion with a militant form of clanship. They have

political ideas and special schemes of their own for sectarian education and propaganda.

Take, for instance, the example of the Lingayat movement in Mysore and the Southern districts of the Bombay Presidency which aims *inter alia* at the spread of Sanskrit learning amongst non-Brahmins ; the strong political organization of the Vokkaligars (agriculturists) of the Mysore State and also the Marava movement of Southern India asserting the right of temple entry against the Shanars, a higher caste. The latter movement has led to serious rioting in the Southern districts of the Madras Presidency, and the dispute continues in spite of legal decisions. The subordinate castes are all asserting superior rights and some of them even aspire to wearing the sacred thread which is the exclusive prerogative of the Brahmin. These and other movements show that the cleavage in India is not entirely one between Hindus and Moslems, for Hinduism itself is divided religiously into innumerable sects not amiable to each other. New temples, new religious practices, such as processions and demonstrations, have sprung up with a new exclusiveness often resulting in communal disturbances.

Owing to changed conditions, India is now

a battlefield of social and religious animosities and it is not easy to deal with disputes within the four corners of the Criminal Procedure Code. As a District Magistrate I had experience, like many other Indian Civil Servants, of having to preserve order by issuing injunctions against one sect or another, forbidding a certain procession with or without music or effigies, or forcible entry into prohibited shrines or holy places. Sometimes these injunctions were due to disputes between Hindu sects. There were besides frequent disputes between Hindus and Moslems due to cow killing and Hindu processions with music. Precedents were cited before me and decisions had to be given on evidence of communal rights of easement and not on equity. Mosques and temples have been built anew; new antagonism bordering on intolerance has arisen amongst the people who lived in rural parts hitherto in peace and concord.

Cow killing and processions with music are the two bugbears affecting peaceful relations between Hindu and Moslems. When I was Diwan of Mysore, with the aid of my colleagues in the Council, one of whom was a Moslem, I made an attempt to solve these two burning questions, and put some

definite proposals before the Representative Assembly for the consideration of both the communities. The line of compromise suggested was that the Hindus should refrain from exercising their right of carrying religious processions with music in front of mosques, and the Moslems would refrain from killing cows within the vicinity of Hindu residential quarters and temples. The idea was for His Highness the Maharajah to issue a proclamation embodying these agreements, so that they would have the force of law. The compromise, however, was not in the end accepted by the parties concerned.

When I had the privilege of interviews with the Marquis of Reading and Lord Irwin during their Viceroyalties, on the subject of communal disturbances, I pointed out that new conditions had arisen, new religious sects and new practices had sprung up, and new rights were being asserted to which old Privy Council and Indian High Court decisions were inapplicable and for which there were no precedents.\* The communal problem is not a provincial problem. It is therefore incumbent on a strong national central Government—be it Federal or otherwise—to control all such matters. How is this to be



done if law and order are to be transferred to provincial Ministerial responsibility? There is no answer to this question in the White Paper which embodies the proposals of His Majesty's Government. The Governor-General and the Governors are to be invested with special responsibility in regard to certain operations of the Government, including safeguarding the interests of Minorities, but this does not cover cases of the kind I have referred to. When new parties are formed under a democratic system, new groups will fight battles for themselves and it may be that political devices will be resorted to by contending groups, seizing sacred religious emblems and holding them to ridicule. There should be rules applying both to the Federal and Provincial Governments for the guidance of police officers as a matter of statutory obligation. The suggested rules should be embodied in the King-Emperor's Instrument of Instruction to the Governor-General and Governors who should have dictatorial powers. In the Instruments of Instruction to Governors it is already laid down that those classes which are under the protection of Government owing to lack of educational and material advantages shall not suffer or have cause to fear neglect or

oppression. This principle should be enlarged to cover all religious and communal disputes. Powers should be specified and means for the Governor-General to exercise them should be clearly indicated.

Conciliation boards or advisory councils consisting of members of different communities have proved useless in the past. One has only to recall the Shanar and Marava riots of South Madras, the Moplah rising in Malabar, the Hindu and Moslem riots in all parts of British India, the Cawnpore massacres, and the recent disturbances in the Kashmir and Alwar States to see how futile they have been.

What are the prospects of a national Indian Government at Delhi under a democratic Federation with the franchise extended and minorities safeguarded by special electorates, preventing such clashes throughout India amongst vast multitudes of illiterate peasants, when some small happening or a mere sign of ill-will is sufficient to rouse the population by the thousand? Religious sentiments and prejudices are older than civilization itself, and civilization has yet to devise a means to harness them to man's common purpose and good. All that it does is to provide civilized methods to increase

the venom due to such influences and to cause appalling disasters.

India is to-day face to face with a religious intolerance due to political rivalries and jealousies which no Government, however constituted, can meet without special powers. It rests with the Central Executive, no matter how it is formed, to have organized strength at call to resist subversion of peace and order and loss of life and property, in the shape of a strong All India Police Force specially maintained for the purpose. The force must be under the direct orders of the Governor-General.

Religion in India has largely ceased to be a spiritual force. The late Mr. Gokhale's plea that public life should be spiritualized was even then a cry in the wilderness. Ahimsa, Mr. Gandhi's famous touchstone for his philosophy of non-violence, is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. In founding the Devalaya, my revered father, Sevabrata Sasipada, aimed at the fraternity of religious faiths in India on a basis of mutual toleration and human brotherhood. That movement, after the founder's death, lost its vigour. We have no religious leaders to-day like Keshab Chander Sen, Dayananda, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The Theo-

sophical Society, the Arya Samaj, the Hindu Mahasabha, seem to me to spend their energies and to use their organizations largely for political ends. Should India be severed from the British connections, the consequence will be too dreadful to contemplate. Without a strong impartial Government at the helm religious and even sectarian animosities may drive the ship of State into stormy seas from which there will be no returning to a harbour of safety and tranquillity. India is truly at the parting of the ways. What is needed to-day is a new Brahmo Samaj movement, by whatever name it may be called, fraternizing with all religions and communities and having social service and uplift as a main purpose.

We have in Russia the anti-religious movement ; we have in Germany the fight between Nazi and Communist, Catholic and Protestant, the Gentile and Jew ; we have in Czechoslovakia the bitterness between the Germans and the Czechs. All these are strongly controlled by extraordinary measures. We have the babel of languages and the strife of culture, even in Asiatic countries like Turkey, where recently Mustapha Kemal promulgated an order to substitute Turkish for Arabic in Moslem prayers ; so that the

traditional "Allahu Akbar", becomes "Tanri Uludur." Such uprooting of deep traditions can only be attempted politically when there is a dictator capable of meeting violent opposition. What personal force is there in India corresponding to that of Mustapha Kemal? Bernard Shaw said that in India we want more than one dictator like Mussolini. Perhaps he is right.

Language and religion are a serious stumbling-block in India's democratic advance. India could be totally denationalized only by the brute force of a dictator like Mustapha Kemal or the Shah of Persia, and thus lose all her ancient culture and traditions and faith and become irreligious, like Japan, where "Emperor-worship" is the only religion, or like Russia, where the machine is the new god. Is this possible in India where the people are steeped in religious sentiment?

Religion is a sentiment, a faith, or a conviction; conviction translates religion into action and shapes the everyday conduct of life. It is a faith and a sentiment with the Hindus and a conviction with the Moslems. I would like to challenge anybody to define to-day what Hinduism is as practised by the bulk of the people. Is it Vedantism, Brah-

(as one day she must) she will have to forge strong weapons for herself to control disruptive forces, and these will surely be in the furnace of autocracy in some form or other with which the President, or Chancellor, or Prime Minister will have to be invested outside the four corners of a really democratic Constitution.

The social problems in India are primarily the offshoot of religious problems, for society in India is divided by religious and social habits and customs which have in themselves a religious sanction. The Brahmo Samaj movement paved the way for the removal of the barriers of caste and the ban against foreign travel and the devoted men of that movement, mostly of the higher castes (my father for instance), suffered considerable persecution leading to ostracism and disinheritance. Woman's education, improvement in the condition of Hindu widows, prohibition of early marriage, raising the age of consent, interdining and intermarriages are some of the social reform activities of educated Indians during the past fifty years. The social life of the people cannot be developed in India on the same lines as in European countries, or for that matter as in Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan, China

and Japan. The position held by women amongst the different social groups are different in different parts of India. Without equality of the sexes and equality of status as between average men and women, the growth of social life will be mainly confined to the advanced sections amongst the people who have travelled and moved on equal terms with the rest of the world. These after all are less than a microscopic element of the vast population of India.

The problem of social intercourse between the English and the Indian in the country itself is difficult, chiefly because of the difference of outlook and customs regarding women in the first place, and habits of dress and food in the second; but common interest in sport and foreign travel has already had a unifying tendency. The visit to England in 1932 of the All India Cricket Team, with members belonging to various communities, was a demonstration of the possibilities of common fellowship and a common bond amongst all classes of Indians between themselves and as between them and the English people. Indian society to-day is moving rapidly towards emancipation in many ways.

This is eminently desirable, so far as it brings people together, although one has to

admit that there is not the remotest chance of Indian customs and habits amongst the majority of our people adapting themselves to one common Indian pattern, or one caste or community surrendering their own in preference to those of others. The actual position is that each individual group is fighting for itself as against the rest, rigidly adhering to its own. In this connection I may be permitted to quote a passage from an address I delivered nine years ago to the Historical Association of the Presidency College, Madras, on "Administration as an Interpretation of History." I said :

"In the history of freedom in the West, the struggle for representative popular Government has been animated by the great ideal of natural rights, the rights of each individual against all other individuals constituting the State. In a homogeneous social polity, the fight for individual rights and franchises in the end makes for social cohesion and socialized freedom. But in a heterogeneous social polity where the units are hostile cultures, communities and stocks, the struggle towards the socialized or democratic freedom cannot proceed exactly on the same lines as in a homogeneous national polity. Not the primacy of natural right or the birthright of every individual or group against every other individual or group can be a sane political



method for such a heterogeneous social composition ; but, on the contrary, the primacy of the duty of every individual and group, their duty towards one another and towards the social whole must be the fundamental and ruling concept. And this was exactly what India emphasized through the ages in her search after social solidarity and peace. If she did not succeed, it was because she did not pursue this aim steadily and as a whole. Each of the two, right and duty, is no doubt a correlative to the other. The Indian historical situation should, at the present juncture, be clearly visualized and a sense of reality should always guide our political efforts."

I have attempted so far to picture the immense and complicated Indian tangle, but I must confess that I see few signs of its early straightening. Maurice Hindus, in his *Humanity Uprooted*, says, "the feature in the religious disintegration of Russia, that is specially provocative of reflection, is the defiant atheism of youth." What is happening in India? The spirit of Satyagraha without religion, renunciation for Mother India "enslaved by Britain" and awaiting her freedom, is spreading her wings as those of a hawk all over the land. This is the creed of the National Congress which has no religion. Hence the National Congress may

follow the footsteps of Bolshevism one day when India obtains complete self-government.

This is a danger which it is well to face ahead. We have not been told what kind of religion Mr. Gandhi professes or in which temple he worships. We only know that he and his followers recite some verses from the Gita, morning and evening, making everybody sit in a posture of prayer. This may seem impressive, but it may also be very theatrical when there is no concrete faith behind it. As Communism is the religion of Russia with the machine as its god, so civil disobedience has been made the creed of the National Congress and for this its followers were prepared to undergo enormous sacrifices. The disobedience preached is really a disobedience to the so-called alien Government, and where is the substitute? Every revolutionary movement in history whether bloody or bloodless had a ready-made scheme behind it. The civil disobedience movement was devoid of any religion or creed affecting the moral and religious instincts of the people, and in spite of its idealism which attracted some earnest minds, it brought to the surface the scum of the population who have really little or no stake in the country.

In Macaulay's time, when English education became the policy of the British Government, the Indians drifted away to religious doubt and moral irregularity. Mazumdar writes in his *Life of Keshab Chander Sen*, "with increasing knowledge there was an increasing progress of secret self-indulgence. Intemperate drinking, licentiousness of thought, taste and character were rampant. Infidelity, indifference to religion and point-blank atheism were unblushingly professed." When Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahmo Samaj his main object was to reform Hinduism from its then degraded forms of superstition and corruption. Now after nearly a century, politics are usurping the place of religious sentiment and even what is left in India of conservative religious beliefs seems doomed to destruction.

India is struggling for the moment with the idea of Swaraj and nationality mainly directed against British rule. That is surely not a permanent factor. The struggle is the result of forces gathering in the sky of Indian politics for the past fifty years. But the rest of the world has changed. Even Europe is now in the throes of a new revolution in science, art, politics and adminis-

tration. European dictatorships have been evolved in Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain and Germany out of democracy, which itself has failed to solve the problem of nations. Fascism in various forms is spreading its wings in Europe to announce a new order of things. Even in England, where "shirts of various hues have begun to make their appearance," the cult is not considered an impossibility. Turkey, Persia, Irak, Afghanistan, China and Japan are moving towards a new Asiatic civilization on altogether different lines.

We are in India still aiming at responsible government, wider franchise and other similar means for constitutional development on Western lines and we are going to have it, too. But even with the "safeguards" and "special responsibility" provided in the White Paper there is little or no hope of India's moral and material salvation till she is united as a nation, and our caste and communal difference are put in the background.

Communal divisions in India are increasing owing chiefly to political ambitions. They are no doubt the result of social and religious differences amongst our people. The unifying tendency of British rule must diminish

in proportion to the development of self-government, and the opposite tendency of numerous groups being formed—even amongst sections following one religion—is already in evidence. This will eventually lead to the formation of innumerable political parties; out of which it will be impossible to form even a coalition Cabinet. One has further to remember that the so-called majority party, namely, the Hindu section of the population, is becoming gradually a more heterogeneous body and disintegrating into many separate and hostile groups which will not act in concert for party purposes in a democratic constitution.

The grave dangers in the spread of communalism in India are perhaps the only justification for the special powers proposed to be given in the White Paper to the Governor-General and Governors to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities; but is this scheme workable and will not the right of ultimate appeal to a single authority let loose all the forces at once to cause that authority bewilderment? It is a purely executive and not judicial authority and must of necessity apply force against those who are the aggressors. Besides, how are the Governor-General and the Governors to

act without facts being placed before them by advisers who will be free of responsibility, ministerial or otherwise? Surely a safer method can be devised by providing for the Legislatures constitutional safeguards as to the proportion of votes required to pass any measure adversely affecting any religious community in matters of general administration, education, sanitation, public health, etc. There can be no division of interests except so far as special measures are needed for the benefit of particular communities, and when there is a clamour for a larger share by any particular section it may naturally involve encroachment upon others. Herein lies the root of the policy of "special responsibility" as provided in the White Paper—so far as the minority interests are concerned.

At the present time the British connection only gives our divided peoples in India a moral support which they most need. The loss of that connection would bring about chaos and be a disaster to civilization itself, for it would mean the breaking-up of India into fragments unable to withstand the onslaught of disruption from the East on the one side and from the Near West on the other. The future of India rests, however,

not so much on 'Great Britain as on Indians themselves. I am convinced that hope for the country is centred not so much on our elder politicians who are steeped in prejudice and bias of one kind or another, but on the sounder and more level headed amongst the younger generation who are already sick of our party differences and sectarian jealousies and may through one of their leaders form an All Indian Party to lead the country to her predestined goal.

## CHAPTER III,

### BRITISH DOMINANCE OR EQUALITY ?

THE poet who sang that "East is East and West is West," saw a cleavage between the two hemispheres which has been lessened in the intervening generation by the increase of co-operation and goodwill amongst the nations of both Europe and Asia. Are we then in sight of the millennium when the twain shall meet? Political and sociological writers have often attempted to indicate the conditions under which there might be such a rapprochement of Eastern and Western culture. There are, however, many sound thinkers, both Eastern and Western, who take rather a gloomy view of such possibilities. Although theoretically the distinction may appear to be merely geographical, history has proved the existence of a sharp difference in the mentality, race instinct, political genius and social psychology of the Eastern and Western peoples. Students point to the fact that for over a century and



a half the creative genius of the British race, with their gift for colonization and Empire expansion, found abundant scope in India.

The unprejudiced will admit that the success of the work will go down in history as one of the most remarkable achievements of the race. This was possible mainly, though not entirely, because the directive and controlling organization of British diplomacy found in India a field for its full display. Though the suggestion may not be entirely complimentary, it is the fact that this aspect of British genius finds its fullest opportunity in an atmosphere of inefficiency, corruption and intrigue, and succeeds generally in evolving order out of chaos under the most difficult and baffling circumstances. The history of the British connection with India from the days of the first charter to the East India Company is ample testimony to the fact. Supremacy and paramountcy have been its watchwords and an inferiority complex the medium through which it has worked.

If, therefore, India now claiming equality transforms herself wholly or in part, and adopts the social and political systems of the West, the question arises whether England will find justification for continuing the

connection or whether she will consider her work fully accomplished. On the part of the Indian people themselves, with the steady increase of national self-reliance, there will be a disposition to limit and finally shake off the association. Amongst extreme sections there exists a revolutionary tendency to subvert every form of government which does not eliminate the British connection.

Let us examine this movement a little further. Are we to have an Occidental East, that is to say, an economically and politically Europeanized Asia, freed from the inferiority complex that has shadowed Asia since she lost her immemorial moral supremacy of the world? If so it will doubtless bring about a more violent conflict between the East and West than mankind has ever seen before. This conflict will paradoxically take the form of a clash between Eastern and Western culture. The civilizations of these two great sections of the human race handed down through centuries of experience, usage and custom, and adapted to their respective environments cannot be materially altered by economic Europeanization, by which is meant the adoption of modern and more scientific methods of industry and government. Besides, changes in these important

directions in the national life of the country will not necessarily succeed in shaking the foundations of national culture. In his remarkable book, *The Clash of Culture and the Contact of Races*, Mr. G. H. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers says :

“ Culture, the fruit and expression of man’s mental activity accumulated and transmitted through the generations, is in history determined by, and in its evolution both limited by, and modified by, man’s capacity.”

The capacity of the average Indian in every sphere and walk of life has appreciably increased during the past half a century. Collateral changes are also taking place in the social systems of the country.

The introduction of modern methods of transport, the spread of elementary education amongst the masses, the gradual lessening of the rigidity of the caste system due to reforms of the marriage laws and social customs, are bringing about a great change by which the lower strata amongst the people are finding their true place as citizens. There will also be a fusion of blood between castes and subcastes owing to intermarriages, the right of which has recently been more fully recognised by law in spite of orthodox opposition. These social movements, con-

sidered along with the economic and political developments, represent the tendency to Europeanization or, in other words, the adoption of Western values in the structure of India to-day.

The underlying causes of Indian unrest can undoubtedly be traced to these movements. It is noticeable chiefly amongst those classes who have been most closely brought under the influence of Western culture, and have most successfully assimilated European education. They have shown a progressive adaptability to the new conditions necessitated by the present-day economic situation, and are striving for equality of status in the Empire as against British domination.

Conflict, therefore, will precede the full establishment of Westernization in some of the features of national life. Adaptation to new conditions comes more quickly in the economic and administrative spheres than in the cultural realm. In the gradual process of reconstruction India will undoubtedly so put her house in order that there will be no need for the British administrator to occupy his former place of superiority and direction. Examples of such a process, although not exactly political in character, can be found in the great changes that are now taking

place in China, and in the growth of Japan to the full stature of a first-class military and naval Power amongst the nations of the world.

It follows that Britain's justification for further upholding the connection with India must be established upon the basis of India's good—of her orderly evolution in the economic, political and social spheres of national life without foreign domination. England should not demand too great a price from India, although a price has to be paid, for the help and guidance which may be required of her in the new scheme of political and constitutional relationship.

The undue prominence of politics in recent years in India has given to the Eastern outlook a Western tinge, and yet created a spirit of antipathy to Western forms of social and religious beliefs fostered chiefly by a narrow and artificial conception of national life. Democracy appeals intensely to the political ideals of the *intelligentsia*, but finds a poor response amongst the minorities, consisting of over 125 million of people who have remained backward in economic efficiency, due to lack of opportunities and education. The result is that the instinct of self-preservation natural to smaller groups finds

its full play amongst this large proportion of the population in India which tends to overlook the larger national interests of the country as a whole. Hence the present tangle.

The peoples being divided into many groups, do not organize their activities except for their own communal benefit. Most of the problems surrounding the grant of educational facilities, employment in Government service and industrial freedom, have their origin in a situation created by the disturbances of the old social structure, within which each unit was self-contained in the past. This structure was tenacious, conservative and opposed to the growth of the individualistic spirit, and promoted as far as possible the greatest good of the greatest number. Now we are faced by all the allurements of democracy, the gospel of the *intelligentsia* borrowed from the teachings of the West.

The *intelligentsia* must not be regarded as entirely the creation of British rule, for it existed in different periods of Indian history. To-day it is imbued with Western ideals of government through the influence of the British example and British standards of political values. It is fighting for constitutional progress with the sole aim of establishing a national government. The people of

India are not to blame for being unable to devote equal attention to her economic problems. Unless and until the voice of the people, which has become articulate through the *intelligentsia* of the country, finds its true expression in a national government, it is doubtful whether the economic evils from which India is suffering to-day can be completely eradicated. England, recalling all her pledges given during the century since the passing of the Charter Act of 1833, cannot be regarded as unmindful of the true needs of the situation. She is face to face with issues which give her an opportunity for one of the most brilliant achievements in her history.

The policy for the adjustment of future relations between England and India therefore should be characterized by a genuine desire to surrender some of the privileges which Britain has enjoyed as the dominant partner and to allow India the fullest possible freedom within her own borders. The administration of British India by pursuing the rigid idea of efficiency and following methods which were applicable more than a hundred years ago, has now become in many respects obsolete and unsuitable to existing conditions. Only under a national government can the

administration be so remodelled as to bring it into line with the present-day needs of the people for political and economic expansion. The administrative authority of the country can no longer be retained by the Indian Civil Service in its present form. In these days of specialization there appears to be no place for the civilian of average ability, who, through no fault of his own, has become a mere machine. Yet this body of public servants, British and Indian, has proved equal to the task of adapting itself to the changed conditions. It is inevitable, however, that the influence of the Indian Civil Servants will, in the future Constitution, be quite different in character from what it has been in the past and they will no longer be the masters.

India must no longer be denied the fullest discretion to recruit her own public servants from the British and Indian people, irrespective of community, caste or creed, and for that matter, from any other part of the world after utilizing her own resources. If Persia can appoint a Millspaugh from America to administer her finances, why cannot India be given the freedom to do likewise? India wants the best of Englishmen to fill positions of responsibility requiring expert knowledge



and experience ; but there is no reason why such men should not be recruited under special contracts, as is done in many cases by the ruling Princes in respect of their State services. Nationalization of the services on the basis of efficiency and fitness must be the aim when educational effort is expanded to give equal opportunities to all. The administrative machinery of British Provinces and the Government of India have to be remodelled to suit present-day conditions and to meet the insistent demand for equality of status.

Internally, irrespective of constitutional issues dealt with at the Round Table and by the Joint Select Committee, India wants something even greater than the gifts of British administration. These include domestic peace and order, protection of life and property, impartial administration of justice, organized police, a highly specialized revenue system, and costly army of occupation. She needs a stronger pulse in her body and richer and healthier blood in her veins. The whole of her educational system has to be remodelled. Her agriculture should be re-organized to increase production in order to give more food to the people who live on the verge of starvation, and more raw materials

for use in domestic industries as well as foreign export. The labouring classes must have a living wage ; subsidiary occupations should be provided for the bulk of the population (whose agricultural calling leaves them unemployed for many months in the year) by the establishment of cottage industries. These measures will raise their standard of living and in the ordinary course create a larger demand for the bare necessities of life, such as cotton cloth and other textiles used by the masses, besides domestic and household goods now for the most part imported. These will also create new demands for additional comforts and conveniences. If an agriculturist can afford to buy even one additional loin-cloth per year, India will require nearly 280 million yards more of piece-goods per annum. This expansion should keep hundreds of factories as going concerns in India. These are some of the domestic and economic problems which a national government should be competent to deal with, once it is invested with real responsibility.

In the higher spheres of economic activity, railways, shipping, banking, industrial finance and tariff policy must come under the direct control of the national Government with full

fiscal autonomy subject to the obligations which have to be fulfilled by India as a co-partner with the self-governing Dominions within the British Empire. The Indian tangle owes its complications chiefly to the economic problem, which as yet cannot be solved by India alone. Great Britain should abandon her policy of supremacy and grant India equality of status, thus making considerable sacrifice of privileges and economic advantage, which any form of supremacy entails. India on the other hand has to bring herself to realize hard facts and to face the situation by welcoming continuance of the British connection on honourable terms of co-partnership. An entirely independent economic existence without British co-operation would be suicidal to her interests as a growing nation.

Apart from the question of the exact form and nature of the new federal structure of All India, there are certain other principles of readjustment between Britain and India. For discharging her obligations India should have a voice and should be represented by election to an Imperial Parliament, and not by executive selection to periodical Imperial Conferences. The present excessive military expenditure could be substantially reduced by a

policy of trust and Indianization of the Army. Is it too much to expect that England should consistently apply to India the principles which she is now so strongly advocating before the Disarmament Conference? Consistency in applying these principles would necessarily involve the abandonment of her present Army policy in India. India can defend herself and keep peace within her own borders by a new organization drawn from the people of both countries combining British support with the true spirit of national self-reliance and self-respect. All these imply substitution of the principle of equality for dominance, not merely in theory but in practice. Sir Henry Maine, the great authority on constitutions, has declared that "the progress of civilization is from status to contract" and there can be no contract except as between two parties of equal status. Thus formulating her present demand for a change of status, India is but making a step forward in the march of civilization.

been brought up in Western knowledge would demand European institutions in the government of their country, and added : "Whether such a day will ever come I know not ; but never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history." John Bright pleaded India's cause in the following terms :

"Your good can only come through India's good. Help India to be prosperous and you will help your own prosperity. There are but two modes of gaining anything by your connection with India—the one is by plundering the people of India and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them. But in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich."

Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon, both keen advocates of imperialistic policy, admitted that the prosperity of England was bound up with the retention of India as the pivot of her Empire.

In 1906, Lord Morley referred to the new spirit which had resulted from higher education in India, and declared, "We should be untrue to the traditions of Parliament and to those who have from time to time and

from generation to generation, been the leaders of the Liberal party, if we were to show ourselves afraid of facing and recognizing the new spirit with candour and consideration."

Besides the opinion of these British statesmen there are the historic announcements of British policy from 1833 onwards, showing a consistent desire to help India in the path towards self-expansion. Lord Irwin's declaration that the goal of India was Dominion Status, meant to all sane politicians nothing more or less than appeared from it. This declaration was made in 1929 with the authority of His Majesty's Government apparently to set all doubts and suspicions at rest. The time has arrived when pronouncements and declarations have to be followed by precise and direct action.

India has been tutored by Great Britain, and now that she is learning to utilize her marvellous wealth and resources in the interests of her own teeming population, England must not seek to retard this development. But if England is expected to make some material sacrifice for the benefit of India, it behoves India also, in appreciation of her debt to England, to make some sacrifice to sentiment. Both must be willing to

sacrifice the present for the sake of the future.

Though England's policy towards India may not have been deliberately selfish, it has been hampered, and perhaps at times misguided, by the difficulties and temptations of "supremacy." In the words of Keats:

"Thou hast sifted well the atom universe,  
But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes."

It is this avenue—the avenue of harmonious co-operation and mutual sacrifice—which offers the only possible solution of the present crisis in India.

The British people, with few exceptions, are fortunately changing their angle of vision and if they are ready for co-operation on a basis of equality, it behoves us Indians, so long as we cannot give up dominating others of our own country less fortunate than ourselves, to accept the offer of British co-operation, so essential to India's unity at the present juncture. When we have equality of status amongst all classes and creeds in India there will no longer be any need or room for British or, for that matter, any outside connection and India is sure then only to gain her true national and political

freedom. Equality of status as between British and Indian is a creed that should instil the principle of equality of status amongst ourselves. Wherever there is dominance, there is tyranny. Till our people are freed from the dominance of caste and communal exclusiveness, the British connection based on equality of status, is essential for India's national unity and salvation.



## CHAPTER IV

### BRITISH PLEDGES AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

**I**T is necessary to allude to the constitutional progress India has, by slow stages, been making during the past three decades, and to emphasize the fact that England had in the course of a hundred years reached a definite policy of equal status as between Indians and Englishmen in the country with opportunities to Indians for the fullest scope to be given to their national aspirations. Yet at each successive stage, owing to mistrust, misunderstanding and dissatisfaction with certain features of British rule in India, it was found necessary to reaffirm that policy in emphatic terms.

In order to clarify the issues which now demand immediate settlement, we may take the famous declaration of 1917 as our text. To understand that declaration and the subsequent establishment of the dyarchical system in the provinces and the attitude of

the English nation to the Indian problem at that time, we must remember that England was passing through the worst throes of the war period. The declaration which has proved of such tremendous import in the history of the British Empire was scarcely discussed in England except amongst a few politicians and journalists.

The outbreak of the World War brought a lull in the demands of the Indian politicians for self-government. There was a wave of loyalty to the allied cause which swept not only over the Indian States, England's traditional allies, but also over British India. After a time, however, when the hardships and the rigours of the war began to make themselves felt all over the Empire, the political agitation again showed itself, and there were further demands for self government which led up to the declaration of 1917 and the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. It is worthy of note that, previous to this, before the outbreak of the war, Lord Morley had denied in unequivocal terms, the suggestion that the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 were a step in the direction of establishing responsible government in India. Lord Morley declared that he would not have associated himself

with the constitution of 1909 if he had believed that it might eventually lead to the introduction of the parliamentary system into India. He did not consider that it was "possible or even conceivable, to adapt English institutions to the nations who inhabit India." Lord Minto was equally explicit in his opinion on this point. "We have distinctly maintained," he declared in 1910, "that representative government in its Western sense is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of Eastern peoples. . . . We have aimed at the reform and enlargement of our councils, but not at the creation of Parliaments."

It follows therefore that the attitude of liberal-minded statesmen in England underwent a fundamental change within a short space of time. Let us ask ourselves what were the events which contributed to bring this about. The year 1916 saw the appointment of the late Lord Chelmsford to succeed Lord Hardinge as Viceroy of India. As Governor of New South Wales, Lord Chelmsford had become acquainted with the theories of a number of earnest students of Imperial problems. Prominent amongst these theories were the views of Mr. Lionel Curtis, who had

a scheme for the formation of a Commonwealth Cabinet, in which Ministers from all the Dominions should sit side by side. In this scheme he saw the only hope for the survival of the British Empire. In order that India might be accepted by the Dominions as having the right to send an Indian secretary to the proposed cabinet, it became necessary to discuss plans for the grant of some measure of responsible government to India. The memorandum drawn up by Sir William Duke (then a member of the India Council in Whitehall), Mr. Lionel Curtis and their friends, and known as the Duke Memorandum, was submitted to Lord Chelmsford in May 1916, and no doubt considerably influenced him in proposing some measure of "responsible government," during his term of office in India. In December 1919 Lord Crewe made a statement in the House of Lords which bears out this assumption. "I know from personal knowledge," he said, "that before Lord Chelmsford went out to India in 1916, he had become clearly convinced in his own mind, from conversations he had with those competent to give opinions and from his own reflections on the matter, that it would be necessary at once to make an announcement of the

character which was made in 1917—namely, that this country was looking forward to an advance in India with responsible government as the goal.”

The momentous change of outlook following on the declaration of August 20th, 1917, could not, however, have been brought about merely as the result of the propaganda of a group of theorists and constitution-builders, however enthusiastic they might have been. Lord Curzon's biographer, Lord Ronaldshay (now Lord Zetland), has recorded that it was actually Lord Curzon's pen which inserted the words “responsible government” in the formula. England was passing through a crisis, and even the most conservative of her politicians realized the necessity for maintaining unity and avoiding dissension within the Empire. Their policy of conciliation was to a very great extent based upon this consideration. Moreover, the English as a nation were proud and grateful for the loyal devotion of the Indians during the anxious years of the war, and felt it was meet that some recognition should be accorded them. The preamble to the Act of 1919 stated the declared policy of Parliament to be the “progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral

part of the Empire." But as Lord Chelmsford pointed out in his letter to a meeting of the East India Association in 1931, there were qualifications and reservations to the effect that progress could only be achieved by stages ; that the time and the manner of advance could only be determined by Parliament and that the action of Parliament must be guided by the co-operation received. These qualifications created grave misgivings in the public mind of India, though the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General from the King-Emperor included the phrase "that India may attain its due place amongst our Dominions." His Majesty's reference to the 1919 reforms as the "beginning of Swaraj within the Empire," the Duke of Connaught's statement in 1921 that "the spirit of autocracy had been abandoned" both pointed to one and the same thing—the grant of responsible government to India.

The people of India, however, had every reason to doubt the sincerity of all such statements because of the manner in which the Government of India Act was actually applied. In spite of their desire to have a Round Table Conference and to replace the unsatisfactory system of dyarchy before the

statutory period of ten years, the British Government paid little or no heed to the changed condition through which the country was passing. The Simon Commission did not receive the co-operation of the *intelligentsia* of India, and the position when the Commission had ended after nearly three years of labour was such that it became necessary for a Round Table Conference to be held in London at the end of 1930.

Why was all this necessary ? The answer is that the people of India had lost faith in British pledges. They were dissatisfied with the wholly non-Indian composition of the Simon Commission. During the intervening period attempts had been made by persons in high authority to explain away or put a limited interpretation on the declaration of 1917. In this respect history was repeating itself, for even Lord Morley went back on his own convictions regarding the new spirit in India and the constitutional purpose of his own reforms. In 1924 Sir Malcolm Hailey, in his capacity as Home Member of the Government of India, with the authority of the Viceroy, Lord Reading, gave a new interpretation to the term "responsible government" when he said "responsible government is not necessarily incompatible

with a legislature with limited or restricted powers."

The declaration of 1917 having been made, the nation is rightly or wrongly committed to it. Unfortunately, however, there was a tendency, even amongst the responsible members of the Labour Party in power from 1929, to lay down reservations, as was evidenced by a speech the late Earl Russell, then Under-Secretary of State for India, made soon after Lord Irwin's pronouncement about Dominion Status. The Viceroy's pronouncement gives the clue to the present Indian situation. It says: "In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the Statute 1919, I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status." We all know how Parliament discussed this matter in the course of memorable debates in which the leaders of all parties, Labour, Conservative and Liberal, took part. The Conservatives were against it,



as also Sir John Simon, Chairman of the Commission, and yet the declaration was upheld.

Dominion status therefore remains the declared goal for India and it was on this assumption that the discussions at the Round Table Conference proceeded. The Imperial Conference of 1926 defined Dominion status in the following terms: "They are autonomous common entities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance with the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." The proposals of the Simon Commission were, as I hope to show in a subsequent chapter, the negation of Dominion status. The problem is how the pledge can be fulfilled with due regard to the difficulties which are neither to be exaggerated nor minimized. The fact remains that India wants to be raised to the status of a self-governing community within the British Empire, as an equal partner. Nothing short of this will satisfy the whole of India, her Princes and her peoples, irrespective of caste, creed or community.

In this connection it is interesting to note

what the attitude of the different political parties has been towards India for many years past. The late Lord Salisbury when Secretary of State for India declared India to be beyond the pale of party politics. Sir Henry Fowler, Liberal Secretary of State for India, declared that every member of Parliament was a member of India. Turning over the pages of the constitutional history of India one cannot help recognizing that it was during the Conservative Ministries in several successive stages, that India secured recognition of her constitutional rights within the Empire. Under Lord Derby, a Conservative Secretary of State, there was the great Proclamation of 1858. It was Sir Stafford Northcote, in a similar capacity, who founded the State scholarships for the encouragement of Indian students. The famous educational despatch of Sir Charles Wood, grandfather of Lord Irwin, may also be mentioned. It was a Conservative Government which laid the beginnings of popular representation in the Legislative councils under the Councils Act of 1892.

The greatest landmark which the Liberal Party may claim to have made in the path of constitutional progress in India is the Minto-Morley scheme of 1909. But Lord Morley's

opinion, already quoted, leaves no doubt that he was not in favour of the development of a system of responsible government in India. Some Conservatives to-day, relying on this often-quoted opinion, are regarded by Indians as opposed to any further advance, and seeking for the opportunity to give a limited interpretation to the famous declaration by Mr. Montagu in 1917. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which followed in 1919 were introduced by a Coalition Government in which both Lord Curzon and Mr. Winston Churchill had ministerial responsibility. Now we have the White Paper, containing the proposals of a National Government in which all the political parties of England are represented. In England and in India a totally different interpretation is given to all the pledges and declarations regarding British policy. Even Lord Irwin, who was responsible for the pronouncement of 1931 on Dominion status, has given a somewhat restricted interpretation of it in Parliament. He said that the "much-discussed" declaration on Dominion status which he gave as Viceroy "dealt entirely with the realm of ultimate purpose." It made no commitments whatever as to date.

Thus we have a political tangle of Britain's

own making Political agitation in India may have slowed down from various causes This should not blind the eyes of English people to the force of India's legitimate demands—which are the demands of the intelligentsia amongst all sections of the Indian people To day the educated Indians do not represent the monopolists for power amongst the higher castes as is generally supposed, but come from all classes and communities A distinguished British member of the I C S , Sir Henry Harrison, nearly half a century ago said

“ Agents, guides, instructors and purveyors of information to the Indian nation as the educated natives already are, very little information ought to satisfy us that the Indian of the future will infallibly think and act as the section of the community, in whose hands are their schools and their presses, their courts, and their public offices, may instruct them It is clearly destined to be the voice of India and the brain of India, the masses will be in its hands and will reflect its teaching In dealing with Young India, therefore, as it sometimes is called, it is the gravest mistake to suppose that we are politically (as we obviously are militarily) dealing with an insignificant section of the community, the sentiments which are now fermenting in the minds of two hundred

persons will flow out, nay, are flowing out, into the hearts of two hundred millions. The greatest blunder that can possibly be made is to suppose that the effects of our dealing with the educated natives can be made to begin and end with that class."

## CHAPTER V

### SIMON COMMISSION AND AFTER

THE Simon Commissioners who sat for nearly three years seem to have had in view the production of a great spectacular film. They were men of great ability and experience, but not experts in this kind of business. The Commission, moreover, failed to rouse confidence in India during the period of inquiry and so the report of their labours was prepared by the Commissioners to justify themselves in the eyes of the world. What could not be enacted as a real life-story of Indian aspirations and Indian demands with real human feeling and human emotion was written in cold blood, to form a record of ruthless logic and relentless judicial summing-up. There was unreality about the value of the Report as a guide or as an inspiration. Since the publication of the White Paper in March 1933, however, it has gained a fresh lease of life. There are certain influential sections of people in England who

are bent upon wrecking the White Paper scheme and would press the proposals of the Simon Commission Report as the best alternative. It is therefore relevant at this stage to refer to it in some detail.

Volumes I and II of the Report, the best seller so far as similar publications go, created an impression unprecedented in the history of official literature. Opinions of individuals as well as of public bodies, newspapers and political platforms were spread broadcast soon after publication of the Report. The Chairman also used the radio to speak to the whole world on the Indian problem, and visited Canada and the United States to enlighten opinion over the whole American Continent.

Never before in history was a Commission chosen for so momentous a task as that of reporting on the future of a huge continent without having any specialized knowledge of the particular problems with which they had to deal, nor did it include any Indian members. As a result of this initial mistake the Commission did not secure the co-operation of the best minds and brains in India. The *raison d'être* of the Commission was section 84A of the Government of India Act of 1919. The personnel was not limited

by that section to members of both Houses of Parliament. Political expediency as then construed by the party in power decided, however, on this mode of selection, which was in striking contrast to the position, status and experience of the framers of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The joint authors of that Report were actually in harness, one as Viceroy and the other as Secretary of State, and thus in daily contact with the realities of the Indian problem. Both were cognizant of and sympathetic towards the intensity of feeling amongst all classes, creeds and sections with whom they were in personal contact. The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, took the personal trouble to make a tour, the first of its kind, to study conditions on the spot. The diary of his tour, since published by Mrs. Montagu, shows a striking contrast between his methods and those of the authors of the Simon Report.

It may be helpful to bring out in relief certain features of the Simon scheme, connected with administration as distinct from political theories, which have received so much prominence owing to the widespread reference to the phrase "Dominion status" to which Great Britain stood formally pledged.



The concluding portion of Volume II of the Report, after recounting the achievements of the British Administration, says : "A Constitution is something more than a generalization," and professes to have furnished materials for a plan by which the Indian constitutional reconstruction may be "peacefully and surely" promoted.

I propose to show that from a purely administrative point of view, the Commission failed in their laudable attempt and that their scheme from the standpoint of the practical administrator was worse, not only in form, but in substance, than the dyarchical system which they wished to replace. From the point of view of the Indian Civil Servant, as a constructive piece of work, the Report was disappointing, and attractive only so far as it was a highly ingenious and eminently artistic production to suit a bewildered mind. The civilian felt that, except incidentally, he was not mentioned at all, and he did not know where he stood in the general scheme. The question as to how the present organization of his Service was to fit in with the Simon scheme was not explained, although a sympathetic arm of protection was extended to him behind the veil by certain safeguards which in reality were not safeguards at all.

The Simon Commission was not honest about this point. It should either have declared itself in favour of the present organization of the service and its maintenance as a "steel frame," or advocated its abolition, for the extension of full responsibility to Provincial Government, both in theory and practice, meant the abolition of the I C S, as it is at present, but this question was evaded.

The Dyarchy introduced in 1921 was a compromise that did not work successfully as its originators hoped and the problem has once for all to be faced when it is agreed that responsibility in the provinces must be granted in the fullest possible measure. The Indian Civil Servants must be told what their position, status and functions are. They should not be put between two stools with the option of utilizing either according to the exigencies of the political situation, unless it is the intention of the framers of the new Constitution to make them mere tools instead of the responsible agents of Government. This important question did not receive the attention it deserved in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and was left unsolved in the Simon scheme. The position of a Civil Servant as a Cabinet Minister appointed by the Governor in a unitary Cabinet, and not

responsible to the Legislature, as conceived by the Commission would be anomalous and repugnant to the principle of responsibility. He would be exposed to the danger of being used by the Governor for the exercise of his extraordinary powers behind the scenes, while his work would not be subject to control by the legislature.

In the opinion of the Commissioners the first principle of the new Constitution should be that it should contain provisions for its own development. Although professing to make such provision the Simon scheme was a rigid and inflexible one, and fixed for all time a division of responsibility in the administrative machinery, which though nominally responsible, would be in the hands of individual dictators in the central as well as in the provincial spheres. Communal differences as well as sectional interests—racial, religious, caste or provincial—were made the subject-matter of appeal to these dictators as the sole judges outside the Legislature.

Yet do not these matters relate to everyday administration? What will be the position of a Minister in charge of Law and Order when in dealing with the people, he cannot be free to act according to his discretion, the only constitutional check imposed upon him

being the vote of disapproval or approval of the representatives of the people in the Legislature? It is probable that, while exposed to the danger of being thrown overboard by the Legislature in regard to such actions, he may be working in secret conjunction with the provincial dictator, or in the obverse case, that he may be supported by the Legislature and yet ruled out of court by the Governor. Are the rights of the minorities as distinguished from those of the majority communities, to remain for ever outside the scope of self-government? If so, a separate ministry should be formed, a ministry which will be responsible to the minorities only and which will stand or fall by the vote of the representatives of such minorities in the Assemblies. The Simon scheme proposed a dyarchy of the worst type, and jurisdiction on behalf of paramountcy over a section of the people only, thereby denying in practice full logical extension of the principle of responsible government.

One experienced in administration both in British India and in the Indian States may well ask what help the Simon Commission gave to reconstructing India on a federal basis. There was nothing in their scheme to show

how their proposal was to lead eventually, even in the distant future, to a definite scheme of Federation, and yet they said: "Our proposals do nothing to hinder, but everything to help its arrival," and they quoted with approval the speech of His Highness the Maharajah of Bikanir which foreshadowed a united India enjoying Dominion status under the ægis of the King-Emperor. The Simon scheme pretended to give a full opportunity for expansion of the application of the Parliamentary system, and yet avowedly rejected the British system. In fact, the Simon scheme was based on opposite currents of thought and the structure did not seem to be built on a harmonious model. The scheme was justified by the necessity of bringing the Indian States into the Federation, but that was not contemplated or foreshadowed as a possibility in the immediate future. Perhaps in this view the Commissioners were wise, for they left the intricacies of the problem relating to a Federal executive, Federal finance and Federal legislature unsolved.

It is unnecessary now to go minutely into details to show the unworkable character of the Simon scheme, both at the centre and in the provinces, for it is no longer a textbook

for the future constitution-maker in India, but only the last trench of defence on the part of those who resolutely oppose any grant of real responsible government or of Dominion status to India. This is shown by the speeches of Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Henry Page Croft, Lord Salisbury and Lord Lloyd in both Houses of Parliament on the White Paper.

A few examples of the paradoxical character of the recommendations made in the Report may, however, be cited : In paragraph 35, the Commissioners say : " We desire to give the fullest scope for self-government, but if there is a break-down, then an alternative authority must operate unhampered." They further say : " We consider that the only practical means of protecting the weaker or less numerous elements in the population, is by retention of an impartial power residing in the Governor-General and the Governors of Provinces to be exercised for this purpose." This surely takes away from those who bear the heat and burden of the day in District administration one of their fundamental responsibilities, thus rendering responsible government in the provinces nugatory and ineffective.

Then again the system of government

proposed for establishment in the provinces is unitary only in name, for though the Report says, "Every member of it should be required and prepared to take responsibility for the whole policy of provincial government," it still included ex-officio non-elected members in the Cabinet and did not define the precise nature of their responsibility, though inconsistently enough, in paragraph 47 the Commissioners proposed "legislative control over the whole field." It was not clear whether on a vote of censure, the official Cabinet Ministers were to be thrown out of office or not.

In paragraph 50 of the Report the Commissioners provided for direct action on the part of the Governor in regard to: (1) The safety and tranquillity of the province. (2) The prevention of serious prejudice to one or more sections of the community as compared with other sections. As already stated, these are ordinary functions of Government. If responsibility is fixed elsewhere than the Cabinet, the position becomes impossible. The Commissioners say that "The principle that we think ought to be insisted upon is that, so long as the normal process of responsible government is being pursued, the responsibility which properly

attaches to Government should be jointly borne by those who have the honour and the care of office." This implies that some individual authority has the right to decide when the normal process is not being pursued, or, in other words, when the machinery breaks down. No scheme of Responsible Government can be regarded as flexible or as having within itself the provision for its own development, which is merely "*a deus ex machina* to make the wheels go round." The Commission did not overlook the fact that "the Governor's position will become embarrassing if, in the exercise of his special powers, he is opposed to a united Ministry supported by a substantial majority of the Legislature," but expressed the futile hope that "a substantial section of the public will give a tacit if not always openly expressed approval," and will "generally rally to his support."

Is it not an irony of fate that the Chairman of the Commission himself suggested to the Prime Minister the summoning of a Round Table Conference? Such a conference was urged vehemently by Indian public men of all parties before the full statutory period of ten years expired, but that request was then refused; it is now six years since the Simon Commission was appointed and we are still



at the stages of enquiry and reporting. When the first Round Table Conference was summoned I raised the question in an article in *Indian Affairs* of its constitutional authority and procedure in the following terms :

“What are the matters to be discussed and how will they be decided? Will the resolution agreed to by the majority have a binding effect on the present or future government or the opposition? Will the three parties agree to allow any legislative measures to go through Parliament without further discussion or controversy, thus prejudging the House of Commons? I have often said that whatever may be the result of the working of the great forces that are now operating on the Indian horizon one has to face the fundamental problem of reconciling bureaucratic agency and a democratic constitution. There now remains very little hope of a compromise between the extreme wing of Indian politicians, represented by the Congress which undoubtedly has developed into a body pledged to independence and severance of the British connection, and the more farseeing and logical-minded leaders of Indian thought, call them Moderates or Liberals, who undoubtedly believe in the British connection.”

The Irwin-Gandhi Pact no doubt produced a temporary truce which rendered it possible

to convene the second Round Table Conference, including Mr. Gandhi as the sole representative of the National Congress. When, however, this pact was broken and at the end of the second Conference Mr. Gandhi was arrested on deciding to resume his civil disobedience movement, the whole Indian political situation changed. With the advent of the National Government in England the Congress was banned as an unlawful organization. The civil administration of India was armed with drastic ordinances with a view to restore peace and order throughout the country. Thus a dual policy has been pursued through the past two years : that of repression and of reforms.

The smaller third Round Table Conference went over the ground in a general fashion but the position as regards the communal question had to be settled by His Majesty's Government in a final award. The very important requisite condition of the Federal scheme, namely, the entry of the Princes, remained doubtful, and it was this that necessitated Lord Sankey, in his concluding address to the third Round Table Conference to ask the Princes not to delay joining the Federation.

The contending parties in India during the

past eventful years have been tossed *oras et litora circum* on the sea of political dissension, while the economic and financial disruption of the country daily becomes more acute. In spite of the Communal Award and the general satisfaction of the Moslems and the Depressed Classes, there is considerable unrest amongst other sections of the people. The Congress, hitherto the only political organization in the country of any consequence, is entirely out of reckoning in the most recent discussions and will probably be in a similar position in the future. The Government of India, faced with the prospect of financial embarrassment attendant on the paralysis of trade and the non-payment of taxes, with movements subversive of Government temporarily dormant, must now accept the olive branch proffered by those who are prepared to make a stand for the retention of the British connection. A clean wound is quick to heal and the battle between the Congress extremists and the supporters of Government must be fought on a clean issue—the retention or non-retention of the British connection. Both the British Government and the supporters of the British connection have now finally to meet on a common ground and the latter can agree

with full self-respect to do so, when they have a definite assurance regarding "full responsible government and the right of the people of India to direct her affairs and safeguard her interests."

But are not the contending parties still disputing over non-essentials and refusing to agree finally to the Federal Scheme which gave a new colouring to the Indian problem? Lord Sankey at the conclusion of the third Round Table Conference said that "India is thirsting." India is not merely thirsting, but she is strangled under the policy of repression however necessary for the time, and politically and nationally is on the verge of a new birth. India, a child of the future, may be a monster more horrible than Frankenstein himself and may be the instrument of her own destruction. The extreme section of the British Press protest against cajoling the Princes to join the Federation in a hurry. The aftermath of the Simon Commission is a Federation scheme, and the aftermath of the third Round Table Conference is the White Paper which provides for Federation on the supposition that not less than half the population constituting the subjects of all the Indian States will come into the scheme. In many

quarters it is doubted whether this *sine qua non* imposed by His Majesty's Government can be fulfilled.

Thus while events since the Simon Report have led as yet to nothing concrete and have made the Indian tangle a real Chinese puzzle, time passes and dangers loom on the horizon both for England and India. England may well be reminded of the solemn words of warning used by Sir John Malcolm more than a century ago. The great statesman said :

“ We are not warranted by the history of India nor indeed by that of any other nation in the world, in reckoning upon the possibility of preserving an Empire of such a magnitude by a system which excludes, as ours does, the Indians from every station of high rank and honourable ambition. If we do not use the knowledge which we impart, it will be employed against us. If these plans are not associated with the creation of duties that will employ the minds which we enlighten, we shall only prepare elements that will hasten the destruction of our Empire. The moral evil to us does not thus stand alone. It carries with it its Nemesis, the seeds of the destruction of the Empire itself.”

I shall, in a subsequent chapter, examine the results of the Round Table discussions

and the White Paper scheme embodying the proposals of His Majesty's Government to see how far they meet the sentiments of this prophetic pronouncement.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FORCE OF NATIONALISM

IT will not be easy for the future historian to put in correct juxtaposition cause and effect in the political history of India during the past thirty years. In one of his speeches, the great Indian patriot Gokhale stated that on the portals of British administration will always be written the words "too late." At every stage of constitutional reform, there has been considerable political agitation, sometimes of a virulent type. It is a moot question which was the cause and which the effect—namely, whether the agitation brought about the reforms or the inadequacy of reforms resulted in the agitation. For instance, when the Morley-Minto reform scheme was introduced there was widespread Anarchist crime in Bengal resulting in the famous Alipur bomb conspiracy case. Lord Morley as a Liberal Secretary of State was responsible for drastic repressive measures to cope with the situation, scarcely

less drastic than those adopted in our time by Lord Willingdon's Government with a Conservative Secretary of State.

The *intelligentsia* of India nearly half a century ago, after years of unorganized effort resulting from contact with Western ideals, formed in 1885 a body called the Indian National Congress. These activities spread even to England, and the first Indian of advanced political thought to contest a seat for Parliament was Lal Mohun Ghose. He may be regarded as the pioneer of the constitutional movement in India, and he was followed by Dadabhai Naoroji, later known as "India's Grand Old Man," whose work, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, is now a classic in Indian political literature. It was through the agitation of the National Congress and the advocacy of delegates sent by that body to England from time to time, that India obtained the small measure of reform which was crystallized in Lord Cross's Act of 1892. The concessions granted were totally inadequate and only paved the way for greater discontent and more intense agitation on the part of the people for real representation in the government of their country. That the heart of England, even at that time, was favourable to "living repre-



sensation" to quote words used by Gladstone during the second reading debate was indicated by a memorable discussion in the Oxford Union that year on a resolution regretting the non-recognition of the elective principle in the Bill. Although the opposition was led by Lord Hugh Cecil, the resolution was carried by a large majority.

On the whole the National Congress, though dissatisfied with reforms then sanctioned by Parliament, continued to retain its confidence in the people of England, and was determined, by further constitutional agitation, to enlighten them so as to secure at the next stage a more substantial measure of self-government. But alas, the wheels of government grind slowly in India, and reactionary forces were at work to stifle, if not to suppress this great national movement, through the instrument of British bureaucracy, the Indian Civil Service. I remember confidential circulars to Civil Servants prohibiting their attendance at any of the meetings of the Congress or its district organizations. The movement was officially ostracized, and thus a cleavage was brought about between the governing class and the people at large. The struggle continued and it was not till 1910, after John Morley had

been Secretary of State for four years, that a further measure of constitutional reform was granted.

As a result of this advance the bureaucracy was compelled to assume a different attitude towards the Congress movement. While Lord Curzon, obsessed by his doctrine of Imperialism, refused during his viceroyalty to receive a Congress deputation, Lord Hardinge in 1911 gave the movement official recognition in this way. The mischief had in the meantime been done; Lord Curzon's policy had retarded the political evolution of India on the lines of harmonious progress. Following the partition of Bengal in 1905 the Swadeshi and boycott movements were organized on a vast scale; unconstitutional methods of agitations were resorted to, anarchist crimes were perpetrated in various parts of the country with the result that repressive measures had to be taken, even by so broad-minded a statesman as Lord Morley. Deportation without trial under an old Regulation, the passing of the Rowlatt Act and other forms of restraint culminated in 1919 in disorders and the calamitous Amritsar shooting under the late General Dyer.

About that time the extreme school of Indian political thought gained control of

the National Congress, and the Moderate or Liberal body established itself as a separate entity in the public life of India. The cult of non-co-operation and passive resistance was preached by Mr. Gandhi and his followers in condemnation of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. From that period onwards the National Congress took the highroad to extremism. The Moderate politicians were left in the background and in a position of great difficulty, wavering between ultra-nationalism on the one side, and co-operation with the Government on the other. This dubiety was caused by loss of faith in British pledges and promises on the one hand and on the other the conviction grew that extremism would only set back the clock of constitutional progress and lead to violence and disorder. In the end good sense prevailed, and the larger section among the Moderates heartily co-operated and did their best to make the reform scheme, based on the Act of 1919, a success.

Indian unrest has manifested itself in various forms since the beginning of the century, but at each stage has grown to larger dimensions and become more highly organized and powerful. The Swadeshi and boycott cults of a quarter of a century ago

have developed to civil disobedience and non-tax movements culminating in a general upheaval in which every grievance, imaginary or real, has been converted into a political weapon

Political agitation and Nationalism in India are not synonymous. Nationalism is a myth if considered as the outcome of purely indigenous forces working from within. It is surely the result of British rule without which there would be no National Congress nor Nationalism in any shape or form. For the whole sub continent of India, Nationalism is a contradiction in itself. If British rule is withdrawn to day, there will be many regional movements towards Nationalism based on language, religion, culture and race origin. This consideration is often overlooked by Indian extremists who view Nationalism as a great unifying and patriotic movement leading the Indian peoples to independence. True Nationalism is really rooted on culture and homogeneity of interest and ideals, aims and aspirations. It is a great force at the present time, but once the vigour of British rule abates, the force will also diminish and clashes of culture will result from warring and divergent forms of Nationalism. This tendency is

observable in the demand for separate provinces.

The Indian National Congress gained momentum because its gospel of hate was directed against an alien rule and through the magnetic influence of Mr. Gandhi, reached the masses whose imagination had to be fired only by concrete emblems, such as the *charka* (spinning-wheel) and defiance of the Salt Act restrictions. But the spiritual side of Nationalism has been dormant and uncared for, owing to diversity of spiritual ideals.

We are often asked, Can India ever be a nation? Osland Spengler says, "Nations are *the true city-building peoples*. In the strongholds they arose, with the cities they ripen to the full height of their world consciousness, and in the world cities they dissolve."<sup>1</sup>

Rome, Athens, Moscow, New York, Berlin, Warsaw, London and Paris have each a definite national significance. India has half a million villages which contain the bulk of her inhabitants. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Benares, Lahore, Delhi mean little as nation-building centres. They often are to-day as they have been in the past, the centres of storm between conflicting cultures

<sup>1</sup> *Decline of the West*. Volume II, page 171.

and traditions Delhi has the association of the downfall of ruling dynasties and the breaking-up of Empires. It is no more a ruling national city than Geneva to-day is such a city for a Pan-Europe. Spengler well says, "So long as a people is a nation and works out the destiny of a nation, there is in it a minority which represents and fulfils its history." What a strange contrast to this are the Indian minorities. They are the forces of disruption. Can we imagine ever a Kaiser in India to build up as in Germany an Indian nation? Or does not the dynastic origin of nations indicate that in the evolution of history in the future, India will have many nations?

In the history of culture, says Spengler, "there is an anti-national element." This is more than true of the ancient Hindu culture which has survived through centuries of change. Hindu culture divided mankind in groups called castes and subdivisions of castes, and its large number of followers cannot be called a Hindu nation. Then again according to Spengler, "When a nation rises up ardent to fight for its freedom and honour it is always a minority that fires the multitude." The Indian National Congress has a majority of the politically minded,

both theoretically and in fact, and the battle-cry of extreme Indian nationalists for independence is as unreal and uncertain as the storm over the desert sands which cares not where it blows. Even the intelligentsia of India, who constitute the moderate Liberals in Indian politics, is diverse in origin and not purely Brahminical as is generally supposed. It has power and influence over its representative groups which can hardly be welded as a nation.

Professor Rupert Emerson, of Harvard University, sounded only two years ago a note of warning, speaking before the Hindustan Association of America in New York, against the play of excessive Nationalism in Indian life. He said :

“Nationalism brings to peoples’ minds a sense of their own dignity and worth, and reinforces the feeling that man should be the master of his own destinies. It lifts the individual from himself and binds him to the whole community of which he is a part, and to whose service he is devoted. If Nationalism is to be a real welding together of spirits, there must be a great sphere of common ends and interests, common goals which all recognize as worthy of their devotion and sacrifice. India is diversity while Nationalism is unity, and it is doubtful whether Nationalism offers India a programme for the future.

If Indian Nationalism should come to mean what European Nationalism has meant—then the future is black indeed. One lesson that can be learned from experience of the West is that oppression leads to a strengthening in the very forces that one attempts to root out. A religious community or a language or a national community which one seeks to force into an alien uniform mould, comes into a new and vital consciousness of itself, and resists with a force that it itself, perhaps, did not know that it possessed. Nationalism breeds counter-nationalism. It might even be suggested that India's Nationalism has arisen in response to the pressure of Britain's nationalism. Is there not a grave danger that Nationalism in India will lead to the appearance of counter-nationalisms within India ? ”

In a recent article in the *New York Times' Magazine*, William C. White pointed out the dangers of Nationalism in Europe. Some of his observations are very relevant to the discussion of Indian Nationalism. He says, “Each nation swept by centrifugal forces draws in upon itself to weather the storm, but conserves its own resources.” Indian Nationalism is a force which is primarily destructive but in practice political and has now entered the field of trade relations between England and India, for boycott of British goods is its slogan. According to



Mr. White, Nationalism feeds not only on ambition and dreams, but on conflicts with National minorities. What do we see in India? Do the Moslems and the Sikhs, the depressed Classes and Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians and the Parsees play any important part in the Indian Nationalist movement? Jharwarlal Nehru, the accredited youthful leader of Indian Nationalism has no following amongst these minorities. Even Mr. Gandhi's leadership is by no means for the whole of India. Indian Nationalism, has become aggressive and forgets "that it is not industry that makes a nation strong, but commerce." Nationalist effort is to stifle trade and commerce and to force them into artificial channels. This aggressive Nationalism is bound to drive the different sections of the Indian peoples further apart politically, economically and socially. India has begun to develop, paradoxically though it may seem, an acute form of provincial and separate State Nationalism. Instead of paving the way for a united India, this will break up the social and economic structure, causing a *débris* of disorganized and self-centred groups which, judging from past history, will be either the tools or the victims of foreign invaders.

There are a few lessons to be gleaned from the history of the British Empire with reference to the general spread of extreme Nationalism throughout the country, politically unsound though it may seem. There is a resemblance between the situation in India to day and that in the American Colonies previous to the outbreak of hostilities in 1775. Then, as now, the failure of the British Government to prove their genuine desire to conciliate had led to direct action on the part of some sections. Mr Gandhi and his followers in their dreary march to make salt on the shores of Dandi in 1930 were animated by a spirit like that of the Boston citizens, who, boarding the ships in their harbour, flung overboard the tea which was to them the symbol of a hated tyranny. At this time Edmund Burke made his fervent appeal for conciliation in words that are worth recalling.

“Power and authority are sometimes brought by kindness, but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence. My idea therefore, is to admit the people of our colonies into an interest in the constitution, and by recording that admission in the journals of Parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit, that we mean

for ever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence."

Great Britain 'emerging from the Seven Years' War, having mounted the 'scale of European prestige and having successfully contested the French claims to supremacy in India and America, was suddenly faced with the American demand for representation. To-day, Great Britain has again emerged from the throes of a great war, again on the winning side and is again faced by disturbance within the Empire. She has no longer the prestige of Chatham's time; she has watched the growth of those same American colonies into a great world power whose navies claim parity with her own; in order to promote world peace she has voluntarily submitted her sovereignty of the seas to international discussion, while at home she is struggling through a quagmire of post-war economic disruption, and is burdened by the heaviest National Debt that her history can recall.

Under these circumstances, bearing in mind the example of 1775 and the determining factors which brought the Irish problem to a close, we can only view with trepidation the present situation in India.

The "belatedness of mind" which Lord Morley complained of as a dominant trait of

British administrators in India "who have, or think they have, the right to dogmatize," is as much to be deprecated as belatedness of action, and more so when action is rendered imperative as a matter of emergency in a situation which is getting out of hand. Six years have been spent in discussions and while past declarations and pledges are being met by further asseverations in certain quarters and withdrawals in others, repression has been an essential part of Government policy.

An important section of the British Press repeatedly asserts "We shall govern and must recall the pledge of Dominion Status to India." But it is too late in the day for England to use weapons from the old armoury. Remembering the American Revolution and recent events in Ireland, we may give some credence to the adage *spoliatis arma supersunt*, and the famous warning of Edmund Burke "The use of force alone is temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity for subduing again: a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered." Besides England's honour is at stake and those that advocate breaking the solemn pledges are doing incalculable harm to the Empire. Mr. Baldwin in significant

words told Parliament in March last, "we may lose India if we do not go forward."

This great tangle which Britain and India have joined in creating will have to be straightened out. Will the grant of a Federal Constitution with responsibility at the centre and safeguards effect the process? One may ask if this solution will prevent the growth of morbid Nationalism and yet bring about the harmonious co-operation which is essential for India's well-ordered economic development and her national progress.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GANDHI CULT AND REACTION

THE late Mohamed Ali at a meeting of the Moslem Association of Bombay in 1930 speaking on Mr. Gandhi, said: "Let us get to grips with the situation that Mr. Gandhi has created. We refuse to join him because his movement is not a movement for complete independence of India, but for making the 70 millions (now 77 millions) of Indian Musalmans dependent on the Hindu Mahasabha whether with or without the British connection." This gentleman was one of the Moslem representatives at the first Round Table Conference. Do his sentiments represent the attitude of Moslems in India about Mahatma Gandhi? I fear that the answer has to be in the affirmative.

Much has been said and written about Mr. Gandhi during the past two or three years and he came into great prominence in 1931 when he attended, as the sole delegate of the Indian National Congress, the second

Round Table Conference after the signature of the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. His countrymen hold him in the high estimation because of his greatness of character, his selfless endeavours for India's freedom, his genuine sincerity of purpose and the great sacrifice he has made for the cause of India. Although the personal influence of the Mahatma is still very great amongst the ignorant masses and amongst a certain section of the intelligentsia, Gandhism as a cult no longer seems to be a strong force. There are many in India to-day who do not see eye to eye with him, and yet have not the boldness to sever connection and start a counter movement. It is nothing short of dictatorship that Mr. Gandhi has been claiming wittingly or unwittingly, perhaps psychologically influenced to some extent by seeing his name coupled with those of Lenin and Mussolini by short-sighted and glamour-stricken writers of the foreign press. If I do not misjudge the under-current of Indian thought to-day, there is a considerable reaction against what is commonly known as Gandhi cult, with which is associated the doctrine of Satyagraha and civil disobedience.

Mr. Gandhi's threat to fast unto death if the British Government did not modify their decision given in the Prime Minister's

Communal Award, so far as it affected the "repressed" classes, made a great sensation when it became known in September 1932. An agreement was reached and was accepted without delay by the British Government modifying in some respects the Communal Award. The views to which I then gave expression in a letter to *The Times* in September 1932, exposes the realities of the situation. I wrote

"The Prime Minister's Award appears to me to be a very statesmanlike solution of this difficult problem. He has explained clearly to Mr Gandhi that his Majesty's Government deliberately decided against the creation of a communal electorate for the Depressed Classes and included all Depressed Class voters in the general constituencies. It is obvious that the present social laws among caste Hindus will place the Depressed Classes for many years to come at a disadvantage, and the Prime Minister's Award only meets this point in their favour in a manner to which no right thinking Hindu, be he orthodox or reformer, can take legitimate exception.

If Mr Gandhi has staked his 'all for their sake' he should have been the very first to welcome such a proposal. His threat is based on his desire to secure for the Depressed Classes joint electorates without which he thinks there is danger of a general disruption



of the Hindu society. It might on the other hand be suggested with great force, that to leave the Depressed Classes unprotected and at the mercy of the joint electorates will 'vivisect and disrupt Hinduism'—to quote Mr. Gandhi's own words. As an Indian who was connected during his young days with the great work of uplifting the Depressed Classes begun by his father in the early '60's in Bengal, and also as an administrative officer in many districts of Southern India and the States of Mysore and Cochin, where the condition of the Depressed Classes is particularly deplorable, I make bold to state that the only satisfactory arrangement for the representation of the Depressed Classes in the new Constitution, which will be to the ultimate benefit of the great Hindu society and conserve rather than disrupt Hinduism, is the one conceived in the Prime Minister's Award. In fact, Mr. MacDonald is more than correct when he stated in his telegram to Mr. Gandhi that the scheme will maintain the unity of Hinduism.

I have often been asked by my friends in this country what constructive work is being carried out by high-caste Hindus for the social amelioration of the Depressed Classes : Mr. Gandhi no doubt refers to the 'marvellous work of Hindu reformers who have dedicated themselves to the uplift of their depressed brethren in every walk of life.' But is there a single high-caste Hindu of note who has an important position in the political

life of the country among the present generation and who has made this his life's work? Is it not a fact that there has been bitter opposition from the bulk of the Hindu community to any attempts towards progress in the moral and material conditions of these people? It is well known that the early reformers, including my father, were bitterly persecuted and the Brahmo Samaj movement from which these reformers for the most part came now has no following or support among the educated classes. To be frank, neither the structure of the Hindu society nor its unity can be maintained in its old form in this twentieth century. If it has withstood every reform from within during the past 100 years since Ram Mohan Roy first attempted to modernize its concepts and precepts, it has to face in the near future a social revolution from the masses, among whom there are no fewer than 52,000,000 who constitute the Depressed Classes to day."

Mr Gandhi, in fixing his sail to the boat of untouchability, made a great political move as even some of his whilom admirers have said. Some misguided adherents have even compared Mr Gandhi to Christ and this has helped to bring about a reaction amongst the whole body of Indian Christians who at one time held him to be a great national leader. One of my English friends whom

I took to an informal reception given to Mr. Gandhi when he came to London for the Round Table Conference spoke to me afterwards and said :

“The personality was there, the thrill was there; why then did he not come up to expectations? Was it perhaps that he took everything just a little too much for granted. Or was it not rather that perhaps one had identified him too closely with one idea of Christ? So like Jesus in so many ways, so often quoting Jesus’ words, yet were the aims of the Mahatma more narrow, less universal than those of the Christ.”

At this gathering an Indian asked the question : “Gandhiji, why is it you have not attempted to develop India’s innate sense of spirituality, being as you were at one time, a spiritual leader? Is not India now losing that spirituality by paying more attention to politics?” Mr. Gandhi’s reply was : “Spirituality without political independence and self-respect is of no avail. Even Christ bore the cross to vindicate the liberty of the spirit, and we cannot be spiritual while enslaved as a nation.” Is this sentiment in consonance with the teachings of true Hinduism? I leave the answer to the pandits of Hindu philosophy, but I believe

that want of spirituality in our Indian politics to-day is a danger. Mussolini has declared: "Fascism gives impulse and vigour to the religion of the country." The Gandhi cult is doomed to failure because it gives no such impulse and vigour to the religions of any of the Indian communities—Hindu, Moslem, Parsee, Christian, Sikh and the Depressed Classes—who go to constitute one-fifth of the total population of the world.

In November 1932 the founder of the "Self-Respect Movement," whatever that may mean, plainly advocated the slogan that "Gandhism must go," and vehemently attacked the Congress agitation. Current Indian opinion from different provinces and even amongst Mr. Gandhi's own followers may be quoted to indicate the beginning of a reaction. The psychological explanation of the present situation is that the Gandhi cult is being rejected by the masses of whom the Untouchables or the Depressed Classes form a very large part; yet the cult makes a curious gesture to give to those people a higher religious status. Their leaders are in doubt perhaps of his sincerity and have not formed a final opinion. The orthodox Hindu community is hostile and a few lip reformers who would not touch an Untouch-

able are in favour. Where will this end? Surely in the end of the Gandhi cult and the beginning of a serious conflict amongst those very people whom that cult has always aimed at befriending.

A dozen years ago, Mr. Gandhi was certainly at the zenith of his power and influence. Then the two leaders of the Khilafat party, namely, Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, nicknamed the "Big Brothers," were Mr. Gandhi's satellites. No leader has had such opportunity as he then had to bring about unity between Hindus and Moslems. The magic charm of his name has lost its potency and the popular superstition of the divine nature of Gandhism and Gandhi cult amongst Hindus has died down. The Mahomedans as a class now distrust him. To the Hindu masses Mr. Gandhi has proved by his own utterance to be only a mortal and has shifted his ground when it suited him—for example when his repeated promises of Swaraj within a certain date had to be explained away.

His doctrines of non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience have inevitably resulted in bloodshed, loss of life and property, and caused much misery to the people. To this his only answer was: "I am sorry and

I will fast for two days." The impracticability of his doctrine is proved by his own statement. "At the outset I had declared that there was every possibility of some violence breaking out as a result of civil disobedience. It seems now to have broken out and it hurts me." Let us also consider his declaration, "Purna Swaraj is quite compatible with India remaining in the British Empire but partnership must be on terms of absolute equality." Did he adhere to this principle in his contribution (if any) to the second Round Table Conference, where he stood alone for a fantastic and non-constructive idealism? Be it said to his everlasting credit, however, that he has produced a mass conscience of self-reliance and self-respect, almost unparalleled in the history of India. This mass movement is Mr. Gandhi's own creation.

He has pinned his faith to the spinning-wheel which will go down in Indian history as a great emblem of freedom and emancipation. Let us examine this a little further. Mr. Gandhi's battle-cry is "that through the *charka* will be achieved the freedom of India. This he hopes to bring about by reducing the poverty of the masses through home spinning, for he believes poverty is the cause of their

degradation. Is there not a serious contradiction in this doctrine? Did the cottage industries of old produce more wealth amongst the submerged tenth in medieval and pre-British India? When the village industry was self-supporting and self-contained the *charka* was predominant. Is it going to solve India's economic evils when villages are being absorbed by the impact of modern civilization, industrialization and capitalism in its worst form, and with which even Mr. Gandhi had to be in political league to obtain the sinews of war for his campaign? The village money-lender is a capitalist of the worst type, and so are the Marwaris of big cities. It is a curious medley of political conception to fraternize with capitalists on the one hand and the poverty-stricken masses on the other. Has not Mr. Gandhi's Congress campaign coupled with mass civil disobedience and boycott, produced untold misery and economic depression throughout the length and breadth of the country?

Potentially Gandhism is as dead as a door-nail. The feeble contribution of Mr. Gandhi to the second Round Table Conference showed the world at large that there was no constructive statesmanship in his opposition or in his dog-in-the-manger policy, on the

communal question. The other Indian delegates were unable to comprehend his attitude. He left the Conference as he went in, sphinx-like, non-committal, sullen and seeking to defeat the whole work of both the British and Indian statesmen who were striving their utmost to arrive at honourable adjustments. His spectacular announcement in his opening speech at the Conference, that he preferred to be a rebel rather than a subject—no doubt vibrated through and beyond the Conference chamber, but it lacked the secret of success for all dictators of the world's history, which is found in Mussolini's own words: "It is necessary to create a political atmosphere which should allow men in Government to have some measure of courage to speak harsh truths and to affirm rights only after having exacted duties, and to impose, if necessary, those duties." The psychology of Gandhi's politics can easily be gleaned from the eleven points set forth in his ultimatum to Lord Irwin in 1931 long before the second Round Table Conference was convened. The conditions of his co-operation with the British Government then were :

1. Total prohibition ;
2. Reduction of the rupee ratio to 1s. 4d. ;



3. Reduction of land revenue by at least 50% and making it subject to the legislative control;
4. Abolition of the salt tax;
5. Reduction of military expenditure by at least 50%;
6. Reduction of the salaries of the highest grade service to one-half or less, so as to suit the reduced revenue;
7. Protective tariff for Indian cloth;
8. Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill;
9. Discharge of all political prisoners, save those condemned for murder; withdrawal of all political prosecutions and abrogation of section 124A, Regulation 3 of 1918, and the like, and permission to all Indian exiles to return;
10. Abolition of the C.I.D. or its popular control; and
11. Issues of licences to use firearms for self-defence, subject to popular control.

It must strike any impartial observer that these questions are not of constitutional importance but affairs of public administration which India must be competent to deal with to her entire satisfaction when she gets a substantial measure of responsible government. If these only are India's vital needs, then why quarrel and why not set about creating the machinery to provide them at

the earliest possible opportunity? The persistence with which Mr. Gandhi has adhered to his purposes, even after his further threatened fasts unto death and releases, has disappointed many of his ardent followers. His motives are now being openly questioned.

The movement to admit the Untouchables into Hindu temples, has no relation whatsoever with the present political crisis. Is this not a purely domestic problem of Hindu society? Surely State interference with the recognized religious usage of caste Hindus who have every right to use their places of worship exclusively for themselves, would bring about serious disputes and result in disturbances amongst the masses. What relevancy this question has to the urgent need of a settlement of much larger questions affecting the whole of India is a puzzle even to most of Mr. Gandhi's supporters. There is much confusion of thought and misconception prevalent both in India and abroad over this matter. I shall show in the next chapter that it is a mistake to suppose that Untouchability is a political question or that its immediate solution is of paramount importance and has any direct relationship to a further constitutional advance in India.

The recent dramatic move on the part of

Mr. Gandhi to fast for twenty-one days by way of penance on behalf of the Untouchables helped to remove the last vestige of glory and of the halo which during the past few years have surrounded this most striking and bewildering personality. Although the first few scenes in the drama attracted world-wide attention, the curtain dropped without any applause or excitement. Here is what one of the Indian newspapers stated when Mr. Gandhi broke the first of his two 1933 fasts :

“ The purpose of the fast has been almost entirely forgotten. Innumerable doctors and attendants ; the experiments with waters, with salt and soda-bicarbonate ; the oil baths and the labours of an expert masseuse—these have occupied the popular mind. Far from creating the impression of a penance, the voluntary undertaken fast has been presented to the world as a feat of human endurance, assisted by eminent doctors, mitigated by all the wisest possible devices short of the actual taking of food, and staged in a palace. It has been asserted that Mr. Gandhi did not choose the location, but none who knows of the aim, who has measured his iron will, can believe this. Three places were open to him—the Harijan hostel, the Ashram, and a palace, and he chose the palace, where, fanned by women, watched

night and day by doctors and nurses, amused by music, lulled by recitations and stimulated by chosen passages of Hindu scriptures, he passed twenty-one days without food for the body."

This quotation may visualize to European readers and also many of the Mahatma's admirers in the continents of Asia and America, the picture of a man with an iron will, gradually vanquished by the stupendous vanity of his own importance. The purpose of the fast has been side-tracked and even those for whose benefit it was undertaken have now begun to realize that the only way to uplift them is not to force open the doors of temples, but to improve their living conditions and environment, so that by such improvement they can gain in self-respect and learn to do things for themselves.

It is clear from the foregoing narrative that the influence of this great leader of Indian Nationalism is fading day by day. Orthodox Hindu opinion is generally against him. The Untouchables regard him with suspicion and his ardent followers have openly condemned his principles of non-violent civil disobedience as impracticable. There is now a serious split in the Congress camp itself. Mr. Gandhi's new creed of individual

civil disobedience is no doubt a climb down in disguise, for however indefatigable, he will never admit defeat and has a fondness for coining phrases to suit awkward situations of his own creation.

All well-wishers of India, both British and Indian, will be relieved if some day they hear that Mr. Gandhi has resolved to abandon politics and retire for silent meditation, thus following the tenets of his religion and entering the last and most renunciating stage of "Brahmacharya," practising real and earnest self-abnegation. Mr. Gandhi's name will go down in history in bold letters as a great man who somehow missed the chance of being the greatest Indian hero of the twentieth century. If he ever recovers his position, I predict with confidence that it will not be through his political activities, but through the birth of a new consciousness based on a spiritual, and not material conception of the needs of the India of to-morrow.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

**T**HE Report of the Indian Statutory Commission declares that "the women's movement in India holds the key of progress and the results it may achieve are incalculably great. It is not too much to say that India cannot reach the position to which it aspires in the world until its women play their new part as educated citizens" (Vol. I, para. 71). It follows that no book reviewing the Indian situation to-day would be complete without reference to the women's movement. This may be said to have begun in the early 'seventies in Bengal after the work of Ram Mohun Roy and the social activities of the Brahmo Samaj which he founded, began to bear fruit. It was due to this cult that the women found their proper place in society in Bengal. The same movement was responsible for the abolition of caste distinctions and the spread of female education in all grades.

A Bengali lady of high caste, Rajkumari Banerji, my mother, having given up along with her husband all the privileges of her caste and social position, crossed the ocean to England in the year 1870, and was the pioneer social reformer amongst the women of India. Married according to Hindu rites at an early age, she was the only Indian woman at that time who by practice, as well as by conviction, followed the principles of social reform inaugurated by my father, Sasipada Banerji, who has been mentioned in previous chapters as one of the pioneer social workers in India. Through the co-operation of my mother he was able to establish the earlier schools for girls and adult women, and later the first Hindu widows' home in India, the first working-men's institute and the first Depressed Classes and Temperance movements in Bengal. In his last years he established the Devalaya to promote the great ideal of Indian brotherhood in social and religious sentiment, and to combat communal and sectarian intolerance and rivalries.

The famous Banga Mohila Vidyalaya produced in later years great social workers amongst women, like Mrs M. M. Ghose, Mrs. Bose, Mrs. P. K. Ray and several others

of note Thus the women's movement in India can be traced back to the heroic efforts of a few prominent Indians in Bengal who (amidst a great deal of persecution and orthodox opposition to the spread of education amongst girls, and the raising of the age of consent and marriage), fought the cause for women successfully, stage by stage, by introducing reforms in all these directions in their own family circles and then outside in the larger group, following the creed of the Brahmo Samaj The Brahmo movement worked itself out by spreading these ideals throughout the length and breadth of the country with the result that to day we have its principles of social service, removal of caste distinction, inter marriage and raising the status of women followed and practised amongst the advanced sections of the different communities in India

The women's movement has grown in volume and intensity during the past fifty years in all the provinces except Bengal, which at the commencement led the van guard of progress but fell in the background owing to a terrible reaction in these activities when Nationalism of a restricted character took hold of the minds of educated Bengalis It is well to remember that Bengalis were the



first to benefit by English education and to visit foreign countries. They were the first to compete for the Indian Civil Service and the Wranglership of the Cambridge University. The first woman graduate in India was a Bengali lady, who passed out of Bethune College, Calcutta. The first Indian to qualify at the Bar and in the faculty of medicine in England and the first to stand as a candidate for the House of Commons, were all from Bengal.

It is to the credit of other provinces that they have followed in the wake of Bengal and overtaken her in the march of progress and social reform. Thus, Madras, at one time most backward and orthodox, has taken the front rank amongst all the provinces and we recently had a Madras lady, Mrs. Muthu Lakshmi Reddy, as Deputy President of the Madras Legislative Assembly. It was Madras that led the way in the enfranchisement of women in 1921. It was in the south, also, in the Indian State of Cochin that I found the women fit to exercise municipal franchise. This was granted, upon my recommendation, by His Highness the then ruler of Cochin, who was by instinct as well as by tradition one of the most orthodox Hindu rulers of India. Madras also heads the list

in the proportion of men and women enfranchised at present: for it is 1-10 in that Presidency as against 1-19 in Bombay and 1-26 in Bengal.

The women's movement in India is not merely sporadic, but is well organized through the various associations in the provinces as well as the central All India Women's Association. There are branches in fifty-four different towns, and centres in twenty others, ranging from Delhi to Tuticorin. The Association has over three thousand members and its importance has been recognized by the Simon Commission, the Indian Franchise Committee and official authorities both at the centre and in the various provinces. It is an educational organization of extreme value to adult women through classes, lectures, clubs and schools and it holds an annual conference for the discussion of all matters connected with the uplift of the status of Indian women. There are, besides, the Women's University at Poona associated with the name of Professor Karve which is organizing women's education, liberal as well as vocational in forms adapted to the special cultural and social needs of India, the Sarojini Dutt Memorial Association for women's institutes in Bengal and various

other Samajes and agencies for educating married women and widows in letters as well as in home industries.

Thus, among the many notable changes that are being witnessed in India, none is more significant than the new era that has dawned in the history of Indian womanhood. For long centuries, Indian women have been living under the oriental system of tutelage, which, while calling forth much mental and moral worth, still made their lives and conditions of development definitely secondary to those of men. Their knowledge and course of life flowed in a straitened channel and limited the possibilities of their intellectual and sociological development. Their girlhood was a forced apprenticeship under their mother: assisting in tending to the babies and busy with cookery and routine, and somewhat rudimentary modes of domestic hygiene and sanitation. Their main qualification for married life added to the experience so earned was an infinite amount of obedience to their husbands, while their capacity to nurse and rear their children on wholesome lines was a mere matter of chance and environment.

As a result of influences which have been contributing to bring India into line with the

rest of the world and the trend of events towards making Indian conditions approximate to those of the West, the old order of events in the life of Indian women is yielding place to a new one which has to be studied, and for which the present and rising generations of the women of the country have to be prepared. The disintegration of the Joint Family system as well as of purdah, the promotion of the scholastic education of girls on co-educational lines and the opening of most phases of public life to women alongside of men, are features of the new era which require careful study. They necessitate proper preparation to fit women to fulfil the new rôles with intelligent appreciation and scientific accuracy. Several years ago, presiding at a prize distribution at one of the high schools for girls in Mysore, I stated that :

“It is absolutely necessary to start an organization throughout the length and breadth of India for the training of women in the field of political and social sciences, social ethics, civic and child welfare, poor relief and other allied matters, so that the most capable amongst them can become leaders amongst their own sex in the field of social, civic, and political activity.”

It is unfortunate that for the moment, owing to the great struggle for Constitutional advance most of the attention is being devoted to the manner and method of further extension of women's franchise in the country. In India, family is the strongest and the most powerful social institution. In Europe, through the spread of democracy this institution is perceptibly breaking up into various fragments and individualism is spreading amongst all classes of the population, young and old, with the result that as a reaction against such disruptive tendencies, we see the wings of the eagle of Communism spreading as a danger to European civilization itself. I am not so bigoted a conservative as to oppose the extension of franchise to women; but having in view the successive recommendations of the Simon Commission, the Indian Franchise Committee and the White Paper on this subject, I can only say that no system, however theoretically perfect, however satisfactory from the point of view of statistics, will work in India successfully so long as our communal rivalries and jealousies and our social system are not substantially modified. The issue rests, therefore, ultimately with Indians themselves and not with the coming Act of Parliament.

The first step to remove the Indian tangle in this respect is to reform the system of education for women which does produce a tremendous conflict of ideals, as evidenced by the case of a young woman graduate of Bengal, who for the sake of her country, to quote her own words, aimed at the life of the Governor of Bengal (Sir Stanley Jackson) at the University Convocation meeting at Calcutta in 1932. The exact percentage of women voters to the male electorate, be it 1-4 or 1-10, and such other details as to the enfranchisement of wives and widows which have been gone into with such great minuteness in the evidence placed before the Joint Select Committee, do not to my mind appear to be of such paramount importance as the reform of the home itself. Women leaders must work, not only for the uplift of the status of women in their own communities, but also for the betterment of their domestic and social conditions ranging from child welfare to the provision of suitable education in all grades and the reform of marriage and divorce laws, besides laws relating to working girls in factories, etc. Unless suitable arrangements are made for co-ordination of all the work relating to the women's movement in India and the elaboration of a complete

practical programme, the movement will, I fear, spend itself more on the political than on the social and civic side.

As a *sine qua non* for the success of such organizing it is necessary to depute selected young women of capacity and enthusiasm, who have already passed through a suitable university course, to foreign countries and their universities for advanced theoretical and practical instruction, as well as for the study of women's organizations in these countries. The aim would be to make them fit on their return to render material help and service for the uplift and advancement of Indian womanhood.

It is easy to talk of the Indian women's question from political platforms having in view conditions of society in more advanced countries, but facts have to be faced as to existing conditions of society amongst all communities in India and the remedies have to be applied to remove these social evils and disabilities under which women labour before the tangle relating to Indian women can be satisfactorily straightened out. As far as is practicable, Parliament should give Indian women all that they demand by way of political rights and privileges. It is obvious that only a fraction of all they get will be

utilized for a long time to come. It therefore makes little or no difference in the determination of the measure of reform to be granted to Indian women in this behalf. The satisfaction of their demands, however, is important at the present juncture as it will help to create those forces and conditions that will influence the remoulding on sound lines of Indian Nationalism with the aid and co-operation of Indian womanhood.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

UNTOUCHABILITY is a term which has come into vogue only during the past few years, and signifies a kind of revolt against caste prejudice and exclusiveness which during the long period of Hindu social organization has manifested itself and oppressed those unfortunate human beings that happen to be placed outside the pale of Hindu society. The original conception of untouchability was pollution or contamination. The 52 million people who come under the classification of "Exterior Castes" in the Census tables of 1931, hitherto known as the Depressed Classes, are not all untouchables; broadly speaking they belong to the fifth caste as the "Panchamas" in Southern India, where the Untouchables for the most part are found scattered in almost every hamlet and village. The Simon Report says that "There is gradation of caste even amongst the outcaste." Untouchability

necessarily brings in its train segregation: rules to be observed for keeping at a safe distance—in other words, unapproachability.

“Panchamas” means the fifth in rank, the first four according to Manu’s caste system being Brahmins, Khastrayas, Vyas-varayas and Sudras. Ethnologically they are a mixture of the various aboriginal tribes who could not be assimilated by the Aryans into their social organization. They had amongst them the Dravidian and the Negroid types of people and to them were relegated by the Brahmins, those menial duties in the village which could only be attended to by the lowest of the low—namely scavenging, sweeping and removing carcasses of dead animals. Segregation was necessary owing to the unclean habits of the people—one of them being eating carrion, which even to day is prevalent amongst scavengers and those allied to them. It has been pointed out by many writers of foreign countries that untouchability is a blot on the Hindu social system, but they forget that untouchability in a general sense exists even in Western countries. It is the result of a division of classes according to vocation and also according to origin. No doubt, theoretically, on the principle of equal opportunities

class distinction is repugnant to modern ideas. But so long as human beings have different habits and customs, and different kinds of work to perform according to division of labour and division of responsibility in the social organization, there must be difference of treatment due to scruples, prejudices and habits. Human beings are conservative as regards race origin and in adaptation to the degree of civilization which different groups of nations have attained.

The Hindu system being the most ancient and most conservative of all, and having survived through many centuries of change, it is not surprising to the student of human psychology and sociology that these differences should continue to exist even in modern times. Have we not untouchability in America? Seventy years after the abolition of slavery in the United States, untouchability of negroes is enforced by rigour of law as well as by rigour of custom against all the coloured population in the States, although it is a moot question whether there are arguable reasons for some of the differences in the treatment of the coloured people in America.

I remember an occasion when I walked along the whole length of a West to East

express train and had to go through a carriage exclusively reserved for the coloured people. The atmosphere of that carriage was different and in fact extremely repugnant. I could not even have sat there for a few minutes without being most uncomfortable and uneasy. It is well known that the habits of people, with reference to their diet and clothing, often give them an odour peculiar to themselves. Unless and until the generality of human beings can be standardized with regard to cleanliness of person, clothes and diet, different classes of people following different modes of life and different rules of personal habit and cleanliness, will not be persuaded to associate on intimate terms in close quarters. That is the fundamental reason for a difference in the treatment of the Untouchables in India.

Leave alone the colour question, there is undoubtedly untouchability even amongst the European races in different countries due to prejudice. Take for instance the bar against Jews in America, even if they are by position influential and by ordinary habits of life equal, if not superior to the average citizen who is not a Jew. Jews are not admitted to the clubs, and even as regards bathing at the fashionable seaside resorts on

the West, the Jews have to form themselves into separate groups as far as beach clubs are concerned. Outside the British Isles the prejudice against the Jews is almost universal in Europe. Recent unhappy events in Germany whereby they have been excluded from office, trade and employment need not be dwelt upon. In Poland, Austria and other countries, where the Jews predominate, their quarters are distinct and separate and social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles is almost non-existent. Have not the English people likewise shown prejudice against Indians no matter how high-born and cultured as regards their clubs in India and some of their boarding-houses and hotels in England on the ground of colour ?

One must realize the significance of the Hindu caste system to understand the cause and origin of untouchability in India. 'It is also strange to observe that even amongst these who are depressed and oppressed' by those above them in social rank there is the rigour of untouchability. Amongst the Panchamas themselves there is more intolerance and hatred between certain groups which are founded on superstition or old traditions of a lower kind. This again is due to the nature of the work each group has

to perform. The lower the nature of the work, the greater the oppression on the part of those who attend to slightly superior duties.

I would refer in this connection to certain rules even amongst the high caste Brahmins and other high caste Hindus. There are rules of habit which show that there is untouchability not only as between castes but even as between individuals, for instance the use of the right and left hand is regulated by the rules of untouchability—each hand is expected to perform certain functions and according to the nature of those functions as others associate with it in social etiquette, there is untouchability. It would be considered the height of rudeness to offer anything to a person, however low, with the left hand, the reason is that the left hand is supposed to be used for certain humble functions which are considered to be inferior to those that are associated with the right hand. Ordinary daily habits relating to a person of the high caste Hindu are differentiated thus. All food has to be taken by the right hand. If an orthodox Hindu sees a European attempting to eat in true Indian fashion and picking up a piece of sweet or fruit with his left hand and putting it to his

mouth, he is horrified beyond measure. But the European discerns no difference. So there is untouchability even between the parts of the human body among the high caste Brahmins. Take again the Hindu ways of drinking water at the railway stations and other public places in India. There are certain castes only who can give water for drinking to the passengers and they carry a vessel and glass from which all classes can take water without any scruple. There are water taps at the railway stations which, if touched by low caste men whose hands are unclean, whose clothing is dirty, whose habits of life are unclean, become polluted. In regard to all matters of food, drink, wearing apparel, there is untouchability prevailing through the whole range of castes in India.

Repugnance to any contact with a hand which is unclean is very ancient in Hinduism. Becoming too rigid and strict through centuries of practice, the idea has degenerated into superstition. For example, if a Brahmin drops a morsel of his food on his dhotie, that dhotie becomes polluted. When he drinks water through a brass tumbler if he touches the tumbler with his lips it becomes polluted. He has to pour

the water into his open mouth and this is a habit which is seen by every traveller in India at railway stations and other places where, when water carriers give water to the thirsty they either take the water into the palm of their hands without touching the vessel or take the vessel and lift it to their open mouth. Everything has to be left untouched by the person when hygiene and purity have to be considered. Contact with another person's hands, mouth or clothing causes pollution according to the class to which that person belongs. It must be admitted that there is logic in such psychology.

The Maharajahs of Travancore and Cochin who rule over several million people amongst whom live the Nambudri Brahmins, the most exclusive high caste Hindus in the whole of India, practise untouchability as a matter of daily routine. If for instance they see a European before they have had their morning breakfast they must take a bath, in order to be free from pollution. Even shaking hands with a European causes technical pollution to their bodies. Nambudri Brahmins, who have kept themselves untouched and uncontaminated by other castes on the West coast of India, live in secluded domains



surrounded by high walls and do not even travel in railway trains for fear of being polluted by the contact of other castes lower than themselves. This fear of pollution is carried to the extreme limit of fixing a certain distance within which no untouchable can venture to approach when a Nambudri is passing.

Although the rigour of these rules is not so great as it was twenty years ago, in remote villages they are still scrupulously practised not only by the higher but also by the lowest orders amongst the population. Hence we see that untouchability prevails in various forms in various countries, according to the nature of personal habits, and according to the religious scruples and beliefs of the people.

We have manifestations of caste distinction even in England, the freest country in the world. No one expects to admit in the folds of his family, if he is a born gentleman, any one who belongs to a rank below him, such as a shop-keeper or a tradesman or a man of the working classes. We often see how particular an Englishman is as regards table etiquette and how he dreads to be seen eating at the same table with persons who do not know how to use a knife and fork

and who have habits of eating and drinking which are repugnant to him. Equality of status spreads similarity of tastes, likes and dislikes and there always will be untouchability amongst human beings so long as everybody is not brought up and grows up in similar circumstances.

All this is not said with a view to justify untouchability in India. Let us consider for a moment the measures that have been taken by Hindu social reformers to mitigate the rigours of untouchability. I remember that in Bengal, even after the great work of the Brahmo-Samaj to abolish caste nearly fifty years ago, there was a hue and cry when a member of the dhoby class (washerman) secured an appointment in the post-office. We who belong to the Brahmo Samaj know how difficult it was for us to have social intercourse with the Untouchables. At first we had to do all that was necessary to give them education, train them to cleaner habits of life, raise their standard of living and instil into their minds rudimentary rules of hygiene. My father who was a devoted social worker carried out these necessary reforms on these lines, and thus created a spirit of self respect and self reliance amongst the untouchables in his native town so far

back as 1866. Being a high caste Brahmin, he was persecuted for this. There are many lip reformers in India who do very little in practice and one has to take into account the deep-seated prejudices and scruples amongst the people and superstitions which prevent them from taking a liberal view of the situation.

Give these people a chance, let them go through a period of reformation and then only can you expect them to hold a place in society and in the country on equal terms. Then only can you expect the prejudiced and superstitious to abandon gradually their narrow ideas and admit the untouchables into their own social circles without the repugnance and horror now felt.

The problem of the untouchables is not a political one. It is purely economic and sociological. The solution will take more than a generation. The caste Hindus have to contend against the great upheaval that has taken place amongst the non-caste Hindus throughout the length and breadth of India to-day and the various manifestations of this upheaval cannot be dealt with in a summary fashion. Leaders must come forward to give the untouchables a helping hand and bring them out of their rut. There

is also the great question of the distribution of labour and the performance of menial functions which cannot all be attended to by labour-saving appliances as in more advanced Western countries. Vocationally the majority of the untouchables will for many years remain in charge of some of those menial duties which no one else will perform. But this is no reason why they should not have better housing, better education, and a better living wage or for depriving them of those elementary rights of citizenship to which every human being is entitled. The Government can do but little in this direction. Giving a few seats to the untouchables as a class for political representation does not seem to my mind to be a matter of such supreme importance as some of our politicians seem to think. The need is for disinterested leadership.

We members of the Brahmo Samaj and our predecessors have attempted for a hundred years to blot out the evil of untouchability in the Hindu social system. I remember being entrusted as a boy forty-five years ago, with the duty of teaching the three R's to the untouchables (called Chamars and Chandals) in my father's night-schools in Barnagar, his native town. We as a family

were treated as outcastes, worse than pariahs, and boycotted in the town. When I joined the Indian Civil Service in Madras I engaged a pariah cook ; my Hindu friends could not tolerate the idea, and treated me with less respect than they did the European members of the Service who did likewise.

The Maharajah of Mysore, one of the most orthodox Hindu Princes, made a crusade against untouchability some years ago by administrative measures, such as opening all State Schools to the Untouchables, 'gradually weaning them from dirty surroundings and habits, giving them clean clothing and settling them in healthy localities, providing the landless with arable land, and finally giving educational facilities in the form of scholarships and other encouragements to enable them to reach higher standards of education, even up to the university grade. The most important reform, however, was allowing the members of this class seats in the Representative Assembly. These measures roused considerable orthodox feeling at the time, but the opposition has now completely died down.

The introduction in the Legislative Assembly in 1933 of the "Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act" may now be

considered. Hindu temples are for the most part endowed by some pious individuals and consecrated by the installation of some god or goddess according to the Hindu pantheon representing some manifestation of the Hindu trinity. The Untouchables have their own animistic forms of worship. They are generally, by time-worn custom, resident in hamlets outside the villages. Their places of worship are in their own hands, whereas the Hindu temples are situated in the residential portion of towns and villages where the majority are caste Hindus and even amongst them different sects have different temples where different deities are installed. Can any one believe that religious sentiment or superstitions have so changed amongst these people that they would leave their own place of worship or emblems such as stones and trees, images of spirits, good and evil, to come to worship elsewhere? Nor is it conceivable that the caste Hindus generally will consent to the use of the temples by those who do not follow their faith. Let the Untouchables be converted to Hinduism first in the strict sense if that were possible; let them admit the supremacy of the Brahmin and follow the bigoted ministrations of the Brahmin priests. For them to claim equality

with other castes strikes at the root of Hindu social religious beliefs and organizations and such a claim ignores the foundations of the Hindu faith, namely, the Brahmin supremacy. This is surely a curious paradox for it ignores human nature and the history of religious institutions.

Religion has played havoc in the history of mankind bringing in its wake intolerance, inquisition, persecution, bloodshed. Thus it is that Soviet Russia to-day has an anti-religious propaganda everywhere leaping to the other extreme like the swing of the pendulum. Is India to be a strong united nation if artificial movements changing religious customs and practices are forced upon 240 million Hindus by our political leaders. Such a step will rouse passion and create discord instead of harmony. Moreover, can these matters ever be regulated by legislation and enforced by law courts against the common wish of the people? Are the law courts to-day regulating Hindu-Muslim disputes? Are marriage laws, for instance, and customs relating thereto modified by legislative action? Are the temples always the scenes and shrines of such holiness and pure religion that Mr. Gandhi should make them the sole goal and ambition of the Untouchables?

Dr Ambedkar, then representative at the Round Table and with the Joint Select Committee, has stated that in his view what the Depressed Classes need is social, economic and educational uplift, rather than permission to enter places of worship where their presence may be resented. The present corrupt form of Hinduism—its superstition, its cruel rigour of class distinction, its monopoly of culture and learning only amongst the priesthood—led Ram Mohan Roy to start the Brahmo Samaj movement as a weapon against idolatry and superstition and as an inspiration to revive the pure theism of the Upanishads. How is the Hindu religion of India in the future to shape itself? Is it to be reformed or crystallized in its present moribund form—with nothing but meaningless ritual and idolatrous worship enjoined upon the ignorant by the more advanced? Mr Gandhi and his followers have been raising a hornet's nest over this question and instead of reforming Hinduism which needs purging of all its excrescence, bias and corruptions, specially the rigours of the caste system, are attempting to perpetuate these tendencies to the declared dissatisfaction of Dr Ambedkar and other leaders. There are surely sounder methods to uplift the Untouchables that will make



them more responsive and sensitive to human feelings. While the Hindu bigotry of caste exclusiveness continues, the Depressed Classes who are Untouchables can find no honourable place in the Hindu fold. What is the alternative but conversion to Christianity, chiefly Catholicism, a movement which grows stronger day by day. Opinions may differ about this question, but Indian publicists have to choose between a liberal social policy of uplift and co-operation within the limits of a reformed Hindu religion and a *laissez-faire* policy.

## CHAPTER X

### RULING PRINCES AND THEIR STATES

**I**NDIAN history for the past 2500 years has presented episodes that make a varied picture of complicated colouring in the evolutionary process of India's political developments. The map of India has often, to use the familiar phrase, changed colour. Parts of this vast sub continent which were at one time uninhabited and covered with forests came under the influence of civilized governments. Likewise kingdoms with largely populated cities have collapsed and crumbled to pieces, the cities thus being abandoned and deserted to be covered by the growth of wilderness.

England's administrative genius has for the past 150 years succeeded in bringing order out of chaos and it has converted the process of continuous change and transformation into a process of steady advance and orderly progress, with the result that those kingdoms and dynasties that came in

contact in a friendly manner with British rule, were able to establish themselves under its protection as part and parcel of an organic whole and not merely disjointed units of disunited and disorganized countries.

We have thus to-day over 600 independent political units in India—great and small—called Indian States, which have all obtained their permanence and security from the British Government under separate treaties, sanads and agreements. These States represent every aspect and phase of Indian history and life. The princes of Rajputana can claim genealogies dating back into the mythical ages and represent the tradition of Hindu chivalry. In South India the rulers of Mysore, Cochin and Travancore represent the descendants of the Aryan invaders from the north. Then there are the Mahratta rulers like Gackwar and Scindia, who date from the rise of the Mahratta power in the eighteenth century. The Punjab States recall the great days of Ranjit Singhji and the Sikh Confederacy. The Nizam of Hyderabad represents, with lesser Mahomedan rulers, those who survived the downfall of Moslem supremacy. It is a characteristic feature that in some of the important States the

rulers are neither of the same race nor of the same creed as the majority of their subjects. The conspicuous examples are the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharajah of Kashmir.

The trend of events brought about by the successive Round Table Conferences has changed the political outlook which has hitherto influenced all questions relating to the Princes and their States. The attractive ideal of Federation which the Simon Commission subscribed to, has developed in the course of various stages of discussion into what is deemed a practical proposition. To-day we are on the eve of making the big experiment of admitting these Indian States into a Federal constitution which will thus embrace not only the provinces under direct British rule, but the independently ruled territories comprising nearly two-fifths of the total area of India and inhabited by some 80 million persons, and subject only to the general control and supervision of the Paramount Power.

This change of outlook adds further strands to the tangle of the Indian problem and tends to obscure many of the implications and issues which arise in an attempt to clarify some of the issues. I may legitimately claim to have some practical knowledge, since for

nineteen years of my service in India I was intimately associated with the directive administration of three of the most progressive and advanced Indian States, Cochin, Mysore and Kashmir.

The States cover an area of 675,000 square miles, and vary in size from a few square miles to a country as large as Italy, namely Hyderabad with a population of 14½ millions. They have come at varying times under the suzerain authority of the British Government, through definite treaties entered into with the rulers individually. The status and authority of these princes was the subject of an investigation by the Committee presided over by Sir Harcourt Butler in 1928. In concluding the report, the Committee said :

“ While impressed with the need for great caution in dealing with a body so heterogeneous as the Indian Princes, so conservative, so sensitive, so tenacious of internal sovereignty, we confess that our imagination is powerfully affected by the stirring of new life and new hopes in the states, by the progress already achieved and by the possibilities of the future.”

The problem of the Indian States is not merely one of defining the status of the

Indian princes with reference to the Paramount Power, but chiefly, if not entirely, the adjustment of relations between the Government of India as such and the government of the Indian States. The important fact that the position and status of the rulers does not provide a complete solution is often overlooked. The constitutional reforms in British India have materially influenced public opinion in the Indian States, and created a keen desire on the part of the subjects of the princes to take a larger share in the administration of their country. The conflict in most States between the autocratic power of the ruler and the claim of subjects to transfer at least a part of this authority to constitutional agencies, is keener to-day than ever in the past.

In an historic announcement by Lord Minto at Udaipur in 1909, the principle of ultimate responsibility of the Paramount Power for the good government of the States was clearly enunciated, while emphasis was laid on the particular stage of development, feudal and constitutional, of individual principalities. In the opinion of the ruling princes the Paramount Power has interfered oftener than was just or necessary, but not a few of their subjects, and some of the British

politicians consider that in recent years Government have relaxed unduly their right of interference to the prejudice of the interests of the people. In this connection I may quote the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri in a speech delivered in Cochin in 1926 :

“ . . . But let me point to this one fact, that during the last ten or twelve years, when the policy of the Government of India has been, as far as possible, to leave the Durbars of our Native States free and untrammelled, political officers have, as a rule not interfered unless gross misrule prevailed. That policy of relaxing the control almost suddenly over a set of people who have long grown accustomed to rigid and indeterminate discipline has had a very unfortunate effect. A great many of the Princes are not to be seen in their palaces.”

Al Carthill wrote in *The Garden of Adonis* :

“ In the East the constitutional method of securing a good ruler is to depose the bad ruler. A bad ruler is deposed and his deposition is regarded with the approval of all, even though he be the descendant of a hundred Princes. The Paramount Power has secured the succession of Princes to their descendants, and also guaranteed protection from foreign invasion and rebellion. The subjects of the Princes have lost a valuable

right, that is the right of removing by assassination or rebellion, a bad Prince ”

We have had recent illustrations in Kashmir and Alwar of the fact, that when subjects show an unruly attitude or defiance of the authority of the Princes, under treaty rights the latter seek British military protection

Various questions which arise from the position and status of the Indian Princes themselves have necessarily to be outside the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. They include minority administration, training of heirs, the civil lists, foreign travel, State budget and finance, palace and military expenditure and the personal conduct of ruling Princes. The Princes played a great part at the first Round Table Conference by agreeing to come into the Federal Scheme and thus surrendering their position of isolated grandeur and internal sovereignty up to a certain point. Their attitude of co-operation in the work of framing the new constitution rendered it possible for the Conference to come to a unanimous resolution regarding Responsibility at the Centre with safeguards and reservations. But no section of the Conference at the time fully realized the implications and obligations involved before the Federal structure could be built



on a solid foundation. The result as I then anticipated was a cleavage of opinion between the various groups representing the Indian States, one standing up for the Federal idea, and the other championing a system of Confederation of States.

Conservative sentiment welcomed this movement amongst the Princes, as it believed in the imperative necessity of stability in the Government of India as a whole if it was to be based on the Western model of democracy. The majority of Princes are autocratic, and the less liberal minded amongst the consultant groups naturally inferred that their participation in the Federal Constitution would give and provide the check necessary against any ill-considered policy that might be adopted by politicians in British India.

The Princes have much to gain and little or nothing to lose which is of any consequence at present by Federation. Their people are clamouring for more representation and for the introduction of constitutional methods. They are handicapped by want of suitable machinery for satisfactory disposal of matters of common interest specially those connected with fiscal relations between the Government of India and the States; moreover their present mode of government and isolation

when they come into a free united India with full responsible government will be a source of danger to themselves and their dynasties.

The people of British India on the other hand welcomed the offer of the Princes to join the Federation for more than one reason. The ideal of a united States of India—a goal formerly held distant and difficult of realization by every authority that discussed its possibility (the Simon Commission, the Government of India, the Butler Committee)—has become possible in the immediate future.

Without the declarations made on the subject by the Princes' participating in successive Round Table Conferences, the Conservative and the Liberal sections of the British delegation would not have agreed to the principle of responsibility at the centre and then no agreement would have been reached. It was also felt that the welfare of the Indian States' subjects would be better safeguarded by the system even though the Federal Government have little or nothing to do with the internal affairs of the States. The general levelling up of the administration throughout India would seem to be a necessary sequel to the Federation of States and Provinces under one central authority.

The gain for the Princes is that they retain intact their sovereignty, their dynastic rights, their personal status, and other allied privileges and full jurisdiction over internal affairs, i.e. subject to such rights of supervision and interference as the Paramount Power now exercises over them. Even in this respect they hope for a substantial modification in method and practice of the exercise of paramountcy. They expect not the same, but less supervision and interference than at present : or at any rate procedure on semi-juridical lines. They will not allow themselves to be supervised by the Federal Cabinet, and they wish the Viceroy (not as Governor-General in Council) to be the authority in all questions arising out of such reserved subjects. They do not want to interfere in the purely internal affairs of the India outside their States.

These requirements will create anomalies, for it will be difficult to define sharp lines of demarcation as to what are matters of joint interest and what are not—what are purely matters of internal administration and what are not. Police, excise, public debt, irrigation, railways, harbours and ports, even public works such as trunk roads, frontier bridges, waterways, canals, rivers will all

be Federal subjects up to a certain point. In the full sense Federation of States with Provinces will only be possible if Provinces and States in the federal structure are on the same footing, viz. full autonomy within and federal relations without. The consequent necessity for surrender of certain sovereign rights which the Princes now enjoy was clearly emphasized by the Federal Structure Committee of the first Round Table Conference, in these words: "The process of federation will involve the creation of a new State which will derive its powers in part from the powers which the States will agree to concede to the Crown to be placed at the disposal of the new Federation."

Moreover, while the representation of the Provinces in the Federal Assembly will be by those returned through popular electorates, representatives of the Princes will be their own nominees, or nominees of the Viceroy, from amongst the State officials. The subjects of the States will remain unrepresented and voteless. How far the Princes in safeguarding their own interests will also safeguard the interests of their subjects through their nominees, is questionable.

Secondly, a question has arisen how to federate nearly six hundred States even

grouping the small ones together. It is no doubt true that not more than a fifth of them really matter, but the smaller States, some of which are governed extremely well, naturally wish to retain their individuality and status. The federal idea is based on voluntary acceptance and as such it cannot be embodied in an Act of Parliament, although the Federal Structure Committee suggested that provision should be made for subsequent entries from time to time. It would be easier for the federal structure to function well if all the States came in at once, but even then each has to be dealt with separately on the lines of individual treaties, conventions and sanads, thus safeguarding treaty rights and also transferring certain privileges and prerogatives to the Federal Government. It is obvious that a treaty revision committee for each State or group of States must be set up to reconcile these divergent interests. This cannot be done all at once, nor can the British Indian reforms be held up indefinitely on that account.

The inconvenience and anomaly of only some of the larger States coming in and most of the smaller States refusing to merge their separate existence by grouping, have to be faced. Federation of all the States with

British India is only conceivable, if the larger States and groups of small States follow the same constitutional methods of government, and adopt a similar method of selecting representatives for the Federal Assembly. Further, security of life and property, an impartial judiciary, a fixed civil list and the establishment of some form of representative government suited to the local conditions of each State should be *sine qua non* for these territories to be raised to the dignity of Federal units. Princes will find it difficult to readjust their status suddenly and make suitable changes in their internal administration before joining the Federation.

Will the States' representatives in the Legislature form a State party and can a leader of that party form a cabinet as Prime Minister for the whole of India? If not, will not that State party often be in the minority, leaving the larger interests of the States unprotected in a democratic form of government? With responsibility at the centre all India questions in which many of the larger States are vitally interested, will be decided by the British Indian majority. Take for example the prolonged Cauvery dispute between Madras and Mysore. The

Madras Legislative Council would surely have decided against Mysore if they had power to settle the question. There is also the apprehension that Indian States, for the most part represented by Hindu Ministers, may join forces with the Hindu majority in the Federal Legislature and thus prove a serious danger to the exercise of adequate safeguards for the protection of minorities, Anglo Indians for instance will have no one to voice their claims from amongst the Indian States' representatives. It will be seen that very much depends on the nature of the grouping amongst the representatives sitting in the Federal chambers and how they are returned.

A few days before his lamented death last April, the late Maharajah Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, declared himself at the annual session very doubtful of the Federal scheme because there were no provisions to protect the States against encroachment by British India. He said the cold logic of the situation had convinced him that the scheme was dangerous to the States and the British connection, and that the essential condition for the entry of the Indian States was the establishment of the rights of the States upon something more

solid than the shifting sands of political convenience. In the present scheme he saw the obliteration of kingship by the inroads of democracy. The Maharajah spoke for a large number of smaller States and gave expression to the views of many of the Indian rulers, although at the earlier stages the sway of political opinion in England which brought together all parties and made them agree to a substantial measure of self-government for India, beguiled many of the Princes into the belief that their entry into the Federation would provide some protection of their kingship against the inroads of democracy.

On the other hand at each successive Round Table Conference the representatives of the larger States have stood up for Federation in eloquent terms. Sir Akbar Hydari, the representative of the premier State, only recently expressed the view that while Hyderabad would have preferred to have no direct interest in the political problems of British India and would have liked to have been left to fashion her destinies in her own way, she had discarded all ideas of splendid isolation so that the "larger entity which is India may prosper and develop constitutionally". Thus we see



two divergent views emphatically expressed, crystallizing themselves at the later stages of discussion.

The Indian tangle as affecting the Princes and their States has become extremely intricate and even those who are fully conversant with the trend of constitutional opinion in the two countries, have failed to find the clue to unravel and straighten out the many doubts and difficulties which have arisen since the Federal idea was ushered in with a flourish of trumpets, at the first Round Table Conference.

The references to the Indian States in the White Paper are contained in paragraphs 7 and 12. Paragraph 7 emphasizes the fact that Parliament cannot legislate directly for their territories and that "the range of authority to be conferred upon the Federal Government Legislature in relation to the States must be determined by agreement". It indicates that the Federal Government will necessarily exercise powers which will differ in relation to the two classes of units that compose the Federation, namely, the States and the Provinces. Paragraph 12 lays down that before the Federal Constitution is brought into operation the rulers of States representing not less than half the aggregate

population of the Indian States and entitled to not less than half the seats to be allotted to the States in the Federal Chamber, shall have executed instruments of accession. Taking these two declarations of policy together, it must appear to any student of constitutional procedure that the Federation is still very much in the air.

His Majesty's Government in deference to the strong unanimous opinion of the Indian delegates at the third Round Table Conference have decided that the coming into being of the autonomous Provinces shall be the first step towards complete Federation for which the "Constitution Act" will provide—in other words they do not intend to leave Federation as a mere contingency for the future. If therefore the primary condition laid down is not satisfied or if the States take considerable time to be in possession of complete knowledge of the character and powers of the Federation, some changes will no doubt be effected in the direction of Provincial autonomy in the first place, and enabling clauses of the Constitution Act for an All India Federation with responsibility at the Centre to operate hereafter. In other words we shall virtually revert to the Simon Scheme, for there will be no responsibility in

the centre without Federation and the Government of India at the centre will presumably remain as at present. Indian politicians and even the Moderate statesmen who have so far done everything in their power to co-operate with England in framing a workable constitution will have justification in that event for accusing the British Government of side-tracking the generally agreed proposal to grant responsibility at the centre.

When the Constitution Bill is submitted Parliament will weigh all questions from every point of view and the tendency may well be gradually to veer round to the Simon Report as offering the most practical solution of the Indian problem. This might satisfy not only Conservative die-hards, but also the over-cautious and timid reformers in the Conservative and Liberal sections. The dissatisfaction and distrust that such a result would produce in the minds of Indian public men of all shades of opinion, would rouse the spirit of opposition amongst them. Yet it is obvious that without the co-operation and consent of the people, no scheme of reform in India will succeed. It is also clear that the majority of Princes are disinclined to surrender any portion of their internal

independence for the purposes of the common welfare and unity. Yet if they do not transfer to the Federal Government some authority by special agreements with the Crown, their position will be anomalous, as they are unlikely to abandon any portion of their claims with regard to "paramountcy and direct relations with the Crown". What chances are there in these circumstances for the All India Federation scheme coming into being in the near future? Moreover, the States will insist on further reservations being made as regards their subjects under the Federal law of citizenship. Where is the prospect with this difference in status, for the promotion of a "feeling of common nationality" and a "peculiar sentiment" amongst States' subjects in favour of a closer union with the people of British India, and for co-operation between them in the working out of common policies?

At the third Round Table Conference, discussions took place as to the financial readjustments to enable individual States to enter the Federation on the basis of a general financial scheme, but it was not agreed that all Federal units would contribute on a uniform and equitable basis to the Federal resources. Accession to Federation

implies separate agreements in regard to cash contributions and questions of immunities and privileges. It would be optimistic to expect that individual States will so regard the advantages of Federation as to waive some of their present privileges, unless and until the British Indian Exchequer makes substantial concessions to them from the Imperial Indian revenues under customs, etc. The Round Table Federal Finance Committee on the other hand were distinctly of opinion that the entry of each State into the Federation should as far as possible result in its assuming liability for an equitable portion of Federation expenditure. It is implied that existing treaties and agreements must be fully observed, and that no change should be made in them without the consent of the States concerned. All that need be said in view of all the conditions is that there appears to be very little prospect at the time of writing of a generally agreed scheme of Federal finance being worked out. We see clear evidence of this in the latest pronouncement of the Indian States' delegation, headed by Sir Akbar Hydari, before the Joint Select Committee. The States' entry into the Federation is now declared to be conditional on balanced central and provincial budgets

and on the fixing of revenues to be retained by the Federal Government at a maximum limit of 50 per cent. These contingencies are most problematical judging from the financial forecast put before the Joint Committee by no less an authority than Sir Malcolm Hailey.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WHITE PAPER

**T**HE Round Table Conference convened in 1930, passed a report favouring the separation of Burma and then converted itself into a Federal Structure Committee of "the whole House". Later a separate Burma Round Table Conference met and discussed a scheme. After a General Election held near the close of 1932, the Burma Legislative Council arrived at a conclusion unfavourable to separation on the terms laid down by the British Prime Minister. It is an irony of fate that one of the first recommendations of the Round Table was thus set at nought by an elected Council, and the issue is being referred to the Joint Select Committee. The Federal Structure Committee presided over by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey, prepared a scheme for an All India Federation including the Indian States, with responsibility at the centre, but the settlement of the communal problem, and many other important questions were left unsettled.

The second Round Table Conference convened in the autumn of 1931 brought into relief the practical difficulties of the Federal idea. The National Congress was represented by Mr. Gandhi, but no settlement was reached on any of the larger issues and the Federal scheme itself was shaken owing to some of the Princes showing themselves in favour of Confederation as a first step.

The communal problem was taken up by His Majesty's Government for settlement and an Award was given in August 1932, which, except in so far as it affected the Untouchables, did not create much stir. After the work of the three special Committees on Franchise, Finance and the Indian States, sent out to India early in 1932, had been completed, a third Round Table Conference was convened. By that time the issues were very much more complicated and no definite agreements had been recorded on some of the most important questions involved in the Federal idea. It had not been the intention of the recently formed National Government to hold a third Conference in London. They desired a quick decision and the appointment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee forthwith to consider the available reports and to frame definite legislative



proposals. They proposed then to invite a few of the leading Indian representatives to join in the deliberations of the Joint Committee. A hue and cry was raised in India when the changed procedure was announced and Moderates alleged breach of faith. After exchange of views between the Viceroy and the Home Government a compromise was effected. A smaller number of delegates was selected for the Third Conference to go into some of the details of the general scheme which had not till then been precisely formulated by the previous Conference and its Committees. The Lord Chancellor at the final sitting on 24 December, 1932, made an important speech from the Chair warning the representatives of the States against delay. Sir Samuel Hoare made announcements which caused further controversy in the rank and file of the Conservative Party. He stated that the great achievement of the First Conference was to establish the fact for the first, and he believed for all time, that the new Constitution must be an All India Federation with the rights of each of the three parties, namely, Great Britain, British India and Indian India effectively safeguarded. Referring to the work of Lord Lothian's Committee on Franchise, Mr.

Davidson's Committee on the Indian States, Lord Eustace Percy's Committee on Federal Finance and the Communal Award of His Majesty's Government, Sir Samuel Hoare pointed out certain essential features of the new Constitution regarding which there was still disagreement—for instance the size of the Chambers and the Indian States representation in the Federation

In a subsequent broadcast speech Sir Samuel Hoare argued that neither in the letter nor the spirit would the proposals be found to transgress the pledges that were given to India on the one hand and Great Britain on the other. Some Conservative papers and speakers continued to allege that limitations promised in speeches of Conservative leaders were to be transgressed.

The later embodiment of the proposals of His Majesty's Government in a White Paper may be considered to have cleared up some of the intricate issues. For example, it is laid down, that the new Constitution will be a Federation of States and Provinces with a bicameral Federal Legislature. The methods of election thereto have been specified. The franchise also is to be largely extended and special safeguards have been provided under the Communal Award for

the minorities. Both the Governor-General and the Governors of Provinces will have "special responsibilities" in regard to certain matters.

A careful study of the White Paper shows that the scheme is a compromise between the Simon Report and the Round Table Conferences. Supporters of the Simon plan naturally object to some of the concessions proposed in the light of the Round Table discussions, whereas supporters of the Round Table schemes object to the compromise as involving some departure in spirit if not in letter from the pledges made by responsible British statesmen regarding Dominion status. Unless a *via media* is found to bridge this gulf, the final proposals of the Joint Committee to be put before Parliament will not satisfy those in England who are now bent upon offering a stout resistance to Responsibility at the centre and the transfer of law and order to Ministers, nor those in India who consider that Responsibility at the centre with the limitations prescribed will be a sham and a delusion.

As I indicated in previous chapters, I am convinced that India, in view of sharp communal differences and a general disintegration of the Hindu society, needs a very

strong executive power, preferably vested in a single person, rather than in a Cabinet. The White Paper makes the Governor-General practically a dictator and in the circumstances no better choice could be made. If India had already enjoyed full parliamentary government and the party system had developed in consequence, it would have been possible for one of the leaders to so control the party machine and public opinion as to be able to secure a large measure of confidence and thus assume the position of virtual Dictator. As it is, the Princes, as well as the peoples of India, will unhesitatingly accept the Governor-General as the best person to exercise dictatorial powers in the new Constitution.

The main difficulty arises in the determination of the categories or subjects in respect of which the Governor-General may intervene and stay the ordinary process of responsible government at the centre. One stumbling-block that has to be removed is doubt in the minds of Indian politicians as to the wisdom of including so many categories within the purview of the Governor-General's interference. Conventions are likely to spring up in the course of time gradually restricting the limits of such interference which, with the

experience Ministers gain in practical administration, will gradually become less and less necessary. It may be expedient at the outset to have a comprehensive list, but they should not be wide or ambiguous in terms such as for example, No. 1, which is : " the prevention of grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of India or any part thereof ". This shows mistrust likely to generate a sense of irresponsibility. It would be more satisfactory to concentrate on the administration of the Army and external affairs, rather than state the Governor-General's powers in such wide terms. I am convinced that the Governor-General's special powers, as well as those of the Governors, cannot be precisely defined to cover the whole administration as the White Paper proposes. Selection could be made of some matters of grave interest, in regard to which there may be an occasion for interference or veto in extraordinary or emergent circumstances. If this is not possible it would be better to leave the matters unspecified and by letters patent to invest the Governor-General with discretionary powers. These he will be slow to exercise in the face of the Constitution, unless compelled to do so. This principle is followed in regard to all the Constitutions in Europe where

there is any kind of responsible government and Indian conditions do not seem to call for exception to the general rule.

Paragraph 14 of the White Paper Introduction provides that the executive power and authority of the Federation will be vested in the King and will be exercised by the Governor-General as his representative, aided and advised by a council of Ministers. It is obvious therefore that the Governor-General as the representative of the King will be responsible to Parliament, both in regard to his special responsibility, and his portfolio which includes Defence, External Affairs and Ecclesiastical Administration. Very little has been stated in the White Paper regarding the Governor-General's position as Viceroy, exercising supervision under paramountcy over the Indian States. For the reserved departments and also for the exercise of his "special responsibility", it is proposed that he should appoint three councillors not responsible to the Legislature. Thus Government at the centre in the new Constitution will be a triarchy consisting of (1) the Viceroy, (2) the Governor General [ (1) and (2) being the same person] and his Councillors and (3) the responsible Ministers.

Grave doubts are felt by many competent

observers as to the workable character of this arrangement. It is separately laid down that the Governor-General should be invested with powers to pass legislation to meet emergencies. These provisions will make the Constitution very complicated. While admitting that the Governor-General should have dictatorial powers I cannot help feeling that he will find it extremely difficult to exercise them when necessity demands. From the point of view of constitutional procedure it would be far better to leave such powers undefined, allowing conventions to grow as experience is gained. This would follow the precedent of the British Constitution itself (happily unwritten) under which the King's prerogatives have gradually been transferred to his Parliament and his Ministers. If this is not done, future historians will blame England for conceiving a cast-iron constitution without any flexibility and without an opportunity being given for further development on sound and progressive lines from within.

A serious defect in the White Paper is the absence of a time limit for further advance in the grant of full responsible government. "Special responsibility" and the safeguards are proposed to be so precisely defined, that

goes out of office, his position may be one of extreme difficulty and embarrassment. Will he not hesitate in these circumstances to make use of those powers and will not these safeguards become, through disuse, practically a dead-letter in the Constitution? Some of the provincial Governors on the other hand, as far as we can judge from present practice, will be members of the Indian Civil Service, for there is no indication that the Secretary of State will invariably choose such Governors from statesmen in England. Their tendencies will naturally be towards exercise of the discretionary powers in the Provinces as often as possible for they will be under the protection of the Secretary of State and not of Parliament.

A most objectionable part of the White Paper scheme is the retention of the personal authority of the Secretary of State in regard to the Services, the Governor-General and the Governors. Sir James Mackintosh more than half a century ago illustrated the different effects which residence in India produces on Englishmen of different temperaments by saying that "some it sultanized and some it Brahminized". The I.C.S. governors will, according to the classification, be all sultanized and their mentality and outlook will



there is no scope for conventions to grow up, limiting the interventions of a single authority, be he the King, or President, or Prime Minister as the chief of the executive. The Governor-General from time to time during his five years of office, as well as the Governors of the Provinces will be invested with a personal responsibility of the highest magnitude, which if frequently exercised will surely result in a conflict between the representative of the Crown and the people. It would indeed be a bad day for India if such friction led to a deadlock and necessitated, as we see in many advanced countries in Europe, the use of powers which unduly stretch the meaning and purport of the Constitution

It is well known that the appointment of a Viceroy rests with the party in power in England. He is a nominee of the Prime Minister, subject of course to the formal approval of the King. Usually this highest office under the Crown is bestowed on a distinguished member of the party then in power. In the exercise of his "special responsibility" the Governor-General may override the Federal legislatures and will naturally seek the support of Parliament; but if a general election takes place and the party who appointed the Governor General

goes out of office, his position may be one of extreme difficulty and embarrassment. Will he not hesitate in these circumstances to make use of those powers and will not these safeguards become, through disuse, practically a dead-letter in the Constitution? Some of the provincial Governors on the other hand, as far as we can judge from present practice, will be members of the Indian Civil Service, for there is no indication that the Secretary of State will invariably choose such Governors from statesmen in England. Their tendencies will naturally be towards exercise of the discretionary powers in the Provinces as often as possible for they will be under the protection of the Secretary of State and not of Parliament.

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tend to render them unfit to exercise those personal responsibilities with due regard to the responsibilities of the Ministers.

I regard the White Paper safeguards with some alarm, not because I consider that safeguards are unnecessary, but chiefly for the reason that in course of time the White Paper proposals if carried out, to quote Lord Lytton, "will bring the whole idea of safeguards into disrepute".

Everyone must recognize that the Indian political issue has become a tug-of-war. Indians of all sections are not satisfied with the White Paper proposals and want more responsibility. But Parliament is not likely to agree to pass a measure embodying greater freedom and independence; in fact, many members of the Conservative majority of the present House of Commons want to go back to the Simon scheme qualified by the non-transfer of law and order. The White Paper offers a middle course which is likely to go through. It is matrimonial alliance without sacramental ceremony between democracy and autocracy; it provides no scope for a divorce or separation and it makes Parliament the supreme court in all Indian affairs. If England is to hold India as a part of the British Empire, and India is to

be "an equal partner" along with the self-governing Dominions and alone remains under the supreme control of Parliament, her position becomes invidious.

We need not recall the great controversy that arose in 1929 regarding the grant of Dominion status. That phrase has been abandoned in recent discussions and the point has at present only an academic importance; but it is necessary to remember that India cannot be expected to be relegated to a position of subordination or inferiority, as compared to the self-governing Dominions, for all time. Even if there is no question of British pledges regarding Dominion status, there is the possibility of a serious rupture in the friendly relations between England and India, much more serious than that we are now confronted with as between England and Southern Ireland, unless India's position in relation to the British Parliament is placed on a higher level than that proposed in the White Paper.

This in my judgment can only be done if in addition to the changes in the Indian Constitution on the lines proposed, India is granted representation in an Imperial Parliament. I admit that this suggestion raises a bigger general issue than the settlement of

the Indian problem, but sooner or later the provision of a really Imperial Parliament will have to be faced if the several self-governing Dominions, as well as India, are to be held together as component parts and equal partners within the British Empire. The suggestion is not new. Those conversant with the constitutional history of England may remember that it was raised more than eighty years ago, when the desirability of admitting the people of the colonies into an interest in the Constitution by giving them representation in the Imperial Parliament was frequently discussed. In 1754 the British Governor of Massachusetts, Shirley, suggested the plan of "uniting the colonies more intimately with Great Britain by allowing them representatives in Parliament". Grenville declared his opinion that the colonies ought to be allowed to send members to Parliament. Edmund Burke made reference to this proposal in the House of Commons in 1775 and Joseph Hume, an advanced Liberal, actually brought forward a motion in the House in 1831, that members should be given to the colonies and four for British India with its then 100,000,000 people. Imperial Conferences held at the seat of the Empire to discuss vital questions from time

to time, are an indirect recognition of the necessity for such representation in an Imperial Parliament.

Conservative as England is, it cannot be expected that the oldest Parliament in the world will suddenly transform itself and admit within its precincts at Westminster representatives of India and the Dominions. A warning is however needed at the present juncture. Like the thirteen North American colonies which became the Independent Commonwealth of the United States, some of the integral parts of the present British Empire may, in years to come, seek to be independent and separate from England. Should India be permitted to express her voice in any Imperial Assembly, whether it be an annual, biennial or triennial Imperial Conference, then such a conference and not Parliament should be the paramount authority in regard to Indian affairs. The Governor-General in that case would be responsible to this body for all his actions.

It is undoubtedly dangerous to set up a dictatorship of the kind proposed in the White Paper without any constitutional check whatsoever. Parliament as at present constituted, the Secretary of State and the British Cabinet cannot exercise effective

constitutional check over the Governor-General or the Governors. Should questions of censure arise these high officers will usually be supported as a matter of policy without any detailed direct knowledge of the circumstances on the "trust the man on the spot" theory.

If the executive power and authority of the Federation is vested in the King and exercisable by the Governor-General as his representative, his position then becomes different from that of the Governor-General in the self-governing Dominions where he represents the King without exercising any executive powers and only acts on the advice of the Ministers. He has no personal authority and needs no constitutional check representing as he does a constitutional monarch, the King of England, who by conventions has transferred his prerogatives to Parliament. By a similar analogy the Governor-General's prerogatives stand transferred to the Dominion legislatures. The Indian Governor-General will be in a totally different position. He will either be extremely unwilling and often afraid to exercise his special powers, or in the alternative he may be tempted to recklessness. Holding as he will a *quinquennial* appointment, he may not

deeply study the consequences that the future may bring. I contend that he should be answerable to an Imperial Conference or Parliament, unless it is provided that the Federal Legislature consisting of both Houses, may by a two-thirds or three-fourths majority pass a vote of censure on his policy and that in such a contingency he shall be removed from office by the King. History teaches us that when safeguards and constitutional checks provide for emergencies such as those enumerated in Paragraph 5 of the White Paper are combined in one person, they are seldom exercised and become obsolete in course of time. On the other hand an attempt to apply too many brakes on the wheels of Administration, with the power given to only one man, greatly increases the chances that the train will go off the rails at some turn or bend.

Whatever may be the defects of the White Paper, however, every friend of India as well as the Empire should welcome and support it as a bona fide and honest attempt to solve the Indian tangle. It is a masterpiece of engineering and the architectural design of the new Constitution is not merely ornate but useful. The architect, however, has gone beyond his province, for he has attempted



to fill in the details which only time, experience and practice can suitably adjust and fit within the main outlines. The needs of to-day will not be the needs of to-morrow and even in some of the essentials, as regards fittings and equipment, a rigid adherence to schedule at the time of the construction of the new Constitution will prove a serious handicap to the people of India for whose benefit the building is going to be erected, for it will leave no scope or choice for future growth and development.

## CHAPTER XII

### INDIA AND EMPIRE TRADE RELATIONS

**A**T a time when competition rapidly grows keener with the modernization of hitherto industrially backward countries, it is idle to expect that ties of sentiment between nations will be a certain guarantee of favoured treatment in matters of international trade. Trading between industrial countries and tropical zones has undergone a great change since the early days of the East India Company. The first travellers to India, before the advent of the European trading companies, returned with wonderful accounts of the splendour of the Moghul Court, of the lucrative trade which India enjoyed and of the superior quality and artistry of her silk, cotton and other manufactures which were exported as far afield as Greece. The tropical zones had much to offer the trader from their natural products, but the trader from temperate zones had little to offer in return,

and was obliged to create artificial wants in order to arrange a system of exchange.

With the coming of the industrial revolution, the products of the East, which had been to a certain extent luxuries, based as they were on highly specialized arts and crafts, became more and more necessary in their primary forms to the everyday life of the nations of the West. These countries in expanding their industries, depended upon supplies of raw materials from the tropics. They reduced their import of finished products of high artistic value and increased their export of goods of a cheaper quality. They flooded Asian markets with European manufactured articles and destroyed more or less many completely indigenous arts and crafts of the East. India thus became an El Dorado, supplying raw materials of great value to the West at the cheapest possible rates and receiving in return their cheap manufactured, standardized goods.

It was obvious that a country so rich in natural resources as India would not remain for ever content with such an exchange. It was seen that the development of home industries would not only greatly increase India's wealth and the wage-earning capacity *of the masses but, as pointed out in the*

Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission of 1922, it would make her less dependent upon agriculture, thereby increasing her stability. The consequent development of natural capital resources would permit the expenditure of greater sums, not only upon industrial expansion, but upon the improvement of irrigation and the introduction of modern agricultural methods and machinery. The latter changes would tend to avert the dangers of famine, and would release more and more workers from the land to satisfy the needs of industry.

John Stuart Mill declared that :

“The superiority of one country over another in a branch of production often arises only from having begun it sooner. There may be no inherent advantage on one part or disadvantage on the other, but only a present superiority of acquired skill and experience. A country which has this skill and experience yet to acquire may in other respects be better adapted to the production than those which were earlier in the field.”

Such a country is India. She has a practical monopoly of the world's supply of jute, indigo, myrobalms, teak, mowra seed, lac and til, and there is a steady demand for her cotton, hides, skins, oil-seeds and spices.

In fact, the unexploited wealth of India is almost unparalleled, for besides her crops and her timber she is well endowed with minerals, including coal and certain mineral oils, and her hydraulic power is capable of development to a remarkable extent.

India was once famous for her craftsmanship. Ship-building and iron and steel manufacture were carried on extensively, and her silk, muslin and other textiles were famous. As pointed out by the Industrial Commission, it was only in the eighteenth century, at the time of the industrial revolution, that India lost pace in the progressive march of industry, and there arose "the erroneous idea that tropical countries, with their naturally fertile lands and trying climate, were suited to the production of raw materials rather than to manufactures".

When I asked Lord Beaverbrook in 1930 what place India occupied in his scheme of Imperial Preference which he was so strongly advocating, he replied :

"In effect India has already achieved 'Dominion status' in respect to her control of her foreign trade, inasmuch as the British Government now accepts without demur the fiscal decisions taken by the Indian Government. *With that devolution of authority I*

do not, of course, propose to interfere, and this leaves the way open for fiscal arrangements which shall be for the mutual advantage of Great Britain and India.

“By Empire Free Trade I mean two things: first, that the import duties of each component part of the British Empire shall be decided by the competent authorities on the spot with a view to its economic and financial needs; and, secondly, that when this decision has been reached, there shall be further modifications of the tariff with the express object of extending the trade between the component parts of the Empire.

“As a matter of fact, the new Indian tariff is a step towards Empire Free Trade, as I have explained it. It imposes a duty of 15 per cent on cotton piece goods imported from Great Britain. This is presumably the duty which is regarded as necessary to enable the growing cotton manufacturing industry of India to compete on a fair footing with Lancashire. But the duty on similar imports from foreign countries is fixed at 20 per cent, which is a distinct advantage to Lancashire in her competition with foreign countries, and particularly with Japan, for the Indian market for imported piece goods.

“As regards imports into Great Britain from India, I propose that they shall be admitted duty free in all cases except those where an import duty is imposed for revenue purposes. Food-stuffs from the Empire would be admitted duty free in all cases,

and tea would be included amongst food-stuffs.

“The abolition of the tea duty last year led of course to the loss of  $33\frac{1}{2}$  per cent preference which Indian tea received. Last year the net imports of foreign tea into this country amounted to 85 million pounds, and under the system of Empire Free Trade that would be subject to duty while Indian tea remained on the free list.

“This is an example of the arrangements between Great Britain and India which are embraced under the policy of Empire Free Trade, and as soon as the total trade between us was subjected to export examination the possibility of making fiscal arrangements to our mutual advantage would become apparent. In bulk the foreign trade of India is already considerable, but its amount per head of her population is very small, and I am confident that under Empire Free Trade it would rapidly expand—to our and India's great advantage.

“This new economic policy would have political consequences of great value, since it would definitely place India on a higher footing in the Imperial system and mark another stage in her political evolution.”

The first four paragraphs of Lord Beaverbrook's statement can best be answered by an extract from the Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission (1922):

“There is a fear that, if India accepted the principle of Imperial Preference, she would find that she had parted with the newly-won privilege of fiscal autonomy; that, in the name of Imperial Preference, the tariff policy of India would be directed, not in her own interests, but in the interests of other parts of the Empire; that, if India signified the acceptance of the principle, the details would be dictated to her regardless of her own interests and wishes.”

It is no doubt true, as Lord Beaverbrook wrote, that the British Government now accept without demur the fiscal decisions of the Indian Government. He refers to the Fiscal Autonomy Convention laid down in 1919. Sir George Schuster, Finance Member of the Government of India, tried to emphasize the same view before the Delhi Legislative Assembly in February 1930, when referring to communications that had passed between the British Government and the Government of India, he said :

“It (the correspondence) affords evidence that the Fiscal Autonomy Convention has become an integral part of the Constitution, and that, even when British interests are most profoundly affected by tariff changes in India, the intervention of the British Government is restricted to representation and appeal.”



A widely held view is that the convention is not such a reality as supposed, when in spite of it the Government of India can so manipulate the tariff as indirectly to benefit the import of British manufactured goods which are in competition with foreign goods of the same category. Quoting Lord Brentford, who said that England conquered India not for the benefit of the Indians but because it provided an outlet for British goods in general and Lancashire goods in particular, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas observed in a debate on the Cotton Duties Bill in the Assembly, two years ago :

“ There is a morbid humour for some and humiliation for others, in this discussion, when one party in the country is actively pleading for independence and the boycott of foreign cloth, that we in the Legislature are being asked to give protection to the British industry. What a moment to choose for such a gesture to Great Britain by the Government of India. If such a gesture is to benefit the United Kingdom, is it not likely that it may foment agitation for not only the boycott of foreign goods but of British goods ? ”

In his letter, Lord Beaverbrook ignored one consideration of primary importance which was stressed in 1922 by the Indian

Fiscal Commission, namely; that the conditions in England and India are totally dissimilar and that a fiscal policy which is of benefit to the one may be unfitted to the other.

“England’s economic life depends on the export of manufactured articles, the raw materials for which are largely imported. The maintenance of this vital export trade is obviously likely to be fostered by a policy based on free trade principles. In India, on the contrary, there is an abundant supply of raw materials and a very large home market supplied in great part by foreign manufacturers, whilst the export of Indian manufacturers, though offering possibilities of considerable development, is comparatively small.”

India’s interests as a country eminently suited to industrial development, can, as this Report showed and experience has proved, best be served by a policy of “discriminating protection”, and such a policy would be nullified if England, which still sends more of her manufactures into India than any other country, generally were given “favoured nation treatment” in disregard thereto. The volume of British imports into India has decreased noticeably during the last twenty-five years in response

to serious post-war rivalry from America, Germany and Japan. India is, however, receiving nearly half her imports from the British Empire as compared with two-thirds in pre-war days. Indians point to the fact that she does not find a quite equal market for her own goods in the British Empire. India has the monopoly in only a few articles, and the greater portion of her exports "compete successfully in foreign markets by reason of their cheapness rather than of their quality or kind." (The Government of India's Despatch on Preferential Trade, 1903.) It is argued that if India were to adopt a policy of preference she would lay herself open to retaliation on the part of nations outside the Imperial tariff ring. This, to my mind, is a likely contingency.

It is inconceivable that the Dominions would allow Indian produce to compete against theirs in their own markets, or that India would allow the manufactured products of the Dominions to compete on equal terms with the products of her own factories and mills. If, as is absolutely certain, the Dominions retain the tariff weapon for the protection of their agriculture and industry, India would not benefit under Empire Free Trade unless she joined hands with the

Dominions and Great Britain in jointly rationalizing both her agriculture and her industries with the other parts of the Empire—a contingency which would involve an industrial revolution. The position of India is peculiar: she is not on a level with the other Dominions or England in respect of industrial development; her industries are nascent or only partially developed and many of her old arts and crafts have either died out or are decayed. A renaissance of these, coupled with an application of modern methods of production and marketing and the establishment of new industries to meet the increased demands of the people for articles required for a higher standard of living, which must gradually come, will all tend to one policy, namely, that of the Fiscal Commission, pushed forward to the limit of absolute fiscal autonomy.

It is presumed that this will lead to a gradual decrease of British imports into India and loss of the great volume of Indian trade which now falls to the British share. But with economic growth and the rise in the earning power of the people, the demand for manufactured goods may double itself in less than a decade. The expansion of industries in India can never cope with such

could be retained for manufacture in the country. The industrial backwardness of India is put down to various causes such as the *laissez faire* attitude of the Government ; the consequent neglect to include scientific and technical instruction in educational curricula ; the slowness of Indian capitalists in providing finance for industrial ventures ; and the inadequacy of banking facilities. Whatever may be the cause the fact remains that India is to-day, to her shame, importing a large category of manufactured articles made from her own exported raw materials. Amongst these articles may be mentioned cotton goods, jute manufactures, soap, paints, varnish, dyes, brushes, buttons, boots and shoes, paper, glue and hardware. Moreover, the development of her iron and steel industries is hampered by the fact that even the small parts of machinery which are in constant demand for repair work are supplied from abroad. In spite of her tremendous reserves of hydro-electric power, and the great demand for electric lamps and fans, all her electrical equipment is still imported.

The war forced upon India an industrial experiment which revealed her latent powers. The shrinkage of imports then necessitated some development of industry. Government

a rise, so that India is bound to go to England and other foreign countries for imports of manufactured goods until she becomes industrialized and economically independent—a condition far distant in a primarily agricultural country. If England wishes to increase or even retain her share, it is not by Empire Free Trade but by rationalization of her own industries, that she must compete with other foreign countries. India must be able to buy in the cheapest world market not only her manufactured goods but also plant and machinery. If England could not keep her supremacy otherwise than by so-called Empire Free Trade, hers would be a gloomy prospect in this region of Trade relations.

Whilst realizing that Imperial Preference does not necessarily rule out a policy of Protection, Indians have opposed it hitherto on the grounds that any system of tariff regulation which does not give due protection against British goods is of no real benefit to India. British competition in manufactured goods can only be disregarded in a few less important articles.

Indians are now realizing that there should be judicious rationing in seeking expansion of markets for raw materials, when these

also result in similar hardships, which must be felt most keenly by the poorer classes. The commodities imported from foreign countries outside the Imperial tariff ring would naturally demand a higher retail price, with the result that the general price level would accommodate itself to the higher rate. Thus the effect of Imperial Preference to the consumer would be exactly the same as that of protection, without conferring a commensurate benefit upon industry.

We may quote the words of Liszt : " The nation must sacrifice and give up a measure of material prosperity in order to gain culture, skill and powers of united production ; it must sacrifice some present advantage in order to insure to itself future ones ". On this principle India is willing to make some sacrifice to patriotism if the goal is a clear one, but what she is not willing to do is to make sacrifices to a sentimental ideal of Imperialism.

Let us see in the next chapter how the recent Ottawa agreements meet the situation.

turned its attention to the matter, and in 1917 there was established the Indian Munitions Board to supervise the development of those industries which were required for war purposes. The cessation of trade with Central European countries during the war gave a great impetus to the Indian manufactures: for example, the raw jute which had been exported in large quantities to Germany and Austria could find no market during the war, but the export of jute manufactures increased to a notable extent.

The war offered a temporary protection for the development of manufactures, several of which, like cutlery, glass and cement, then came into existence. Unhappily it also caused a rise in the price of necessities, and thus imposed hardships on the people. Indians do not ignore this fact in their demand for protection. A policy of protection will impose even greater hardships until such a time as the nascent industries are able to supply cheaper articles than those which were previously imported from abroad. It is recognized that a period of readjustment must entail a certain degree of hardship, but examining the alternative course of Imperial Preference we see that that must



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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE OTTAWA AGREEMENTS

THE Government of India accepted the invitation to attend the Imperial Conference at Ottawa in 1932 on the ground that isolation would be inadvisable when all the other countries of the Empire were considering the question of trade agreements between each other.

When British tariff policy changed in the autumn of 1931, it became evident that if a system of preference excluded India, it would be a serious matter. The Government of India therefore agreed to negotiate at Ottawa with the result that certain undertakings have been given on behalf of His Majesty's Government on the one hand and on behalf of the Government of India on the other for a reciprocal arrangement under preference. These arrangements which are subject to reconsideration after three years, mark a very important departure in the fiscal policy of India. We may examine the

argument that British and Indian economic interests are jointly safeguarded by these arrangements.

India has always contended that she has not the economic freedom necessary for her expansion and industrial progress. Doubts were expressed at the first Round Table Conference by British delegates as to the possibilities of Indian interference with British capitalists in India. While the necessity for friendly relations between the two countries was considered a *sine qua non* for the development if not the maintenance of the existing trade relations, the Europeans in India voted for further reforms on the assurance that they would have safeguards for carrying on their legitimate business in the country. The attitude of the British merchants and the Indian politicians on the subject of British commercial interests can very well be seen from the following extracts in a letter addressed to Parliament by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon on the eve of the first Round Table Conference :

“That commercial enterprises which have been built up by British energy and on British capital and which have contributed in no small measure to India's welfare should

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friends the Europeans who have settled down in India or who carry on their business there should feel that they have the same rights and privileges which genuine-born Indians have. They are quite welcome to suggest any safeguards for their rights and interests, and we shall be more than willing to meet them."

The White Paper includes under the Governor-General's "special responsibilities" the prevention of commercial discrimination. Indian opinion may legitimately urge that the exercise of the executive responsibility of the Governor-General under this category may go directly against Indian interests. Many of the responsible commercial organizations of India have argued cogently that the Ottawa agreements are not likely to be in the long run beneficial to India's economic and industrial advance. It will be a danger to the future Constitution of India if the Governor-General has to exercise his veto on any legislative measure which seeks to protect India's national interests. The category "Prevention of Commercial Discrimination" is too wide and should have been restricted to its application as a "political weapon"—the words used in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact about "boycott of British goods". The

require to be protected from discriminatory legislation, though scarcely credible, is true. Any failure to introduce into the new Constitution for India a statutory provision ensuring for British subjects of the Crown complete equality with Indian subjects so far as trading status is concerned will leave vast commercial interests at the mercy of the legislature, a section of which is avowedly anti-British.

"It may be contended that the British trader's contribution to India's progress entitles him to more, but all that is asked is that he may continue to have the right to trade on an equal footing with his Indian colleagues. Preferential treatment is not asked for, but it is the considered opinion of the Associated Chambers that this equality should be clearly defined and laid down in the form of a suitable clause in the new Constitution."

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru gave the Indian points of view at the Round Table Conference in the following terms :

"What is the trouble about commerce? There is a very large amount of European capital invested in India, but I am not one of those—and I believe there is not such a man here—who would like to have any expropriatory legislation. We do not want to rob the Europeans of their capital. On the contrary, we are most anxious that our



shipping and by income-tax and customs officials against Indian merchants : and that India's industrialization has been impeded by discriminatory protection whereby railway rates have favoured imported articles in comparison with manufactured articles going from the interior to the ports. I can speak from personal knowledge, when dealing with the products of the Mysore iron and wood distillation works. The Traffic Manager of the Madras Railways could or would do nothing to reduce the prohibitive rates from Mysore to Madras and this basic industry at the initial stages suffered heavy losses on account of transport charges. If India does not secure economic freedom to do as she likes in regard to economic wealth and the development of her import and export trade, her banking, shipping and railway policy, then there is poor prospect of a satisfactory settlement of the Indian problem—one which to-day is for the most part economic rather than political and will remain so for many years to come.

I have pointed out in a previous chapter that the old colonial policy of England was that of exploitation for the advantage of the mother country. Before these colonies became independent British capital was

economic interests of the two countries pursued without friendly co-operation are sure to create a conflict and it is probable that commercial discrimination will have to be applied only in India's interest, just as her tariff policy under the Fiscal Convention has often been worked against British interests in Lancashire. There cannot be effective responsibility at the centre and provincial autonomy if these special responsibilities are not restricted to emergencies of a political character and if they are allowed to appear in the Constitution as a standing evidence of struggle between the two countries on all matters affecting their economic relations such as trade, finance, banking, railway policy, shipping, freight, etc. It is held that in the past discrimination was 'practised in' India against Indians in mining and forest concessions, in railway and public works' contracts, and in the tenders for purchase of stores. Why should not some liberty be given to the Federal Indian Government and the Provincial Governments to impose similar discrimination against British interests when they are opposed, or prejudicial, to Indian interests?

It is alleged that discrimination has been *shown by port authorities towards Indian*

or the retention of trade which would otherwise have been diminished or altogether lost. Applying this test the Delegation recorded their definite opinion that the agreement is "advantageous to India not in the sense that what she gains is greater than what she gives, but in the sense that what she has gained are solid and substantial advantages and what she has given can be given without detriment to any national interests".

Some Indian economists after careful calculation have come to the conclusion that there will be no real extension and development of the export trade of India, and on the whole India will incur greater loss than gain by acceptance of the agreement. It is held that she will lose, as customers, some of the foreign countries who now buy her raw materials, as they will not be able to sell their manufactured goods in the face of the preference competition of England. The Government stated that in concluding the Ottawa agreements two main principles were kept in view—namely, the extension and development of the export trade of India and the reservation of the protection enjoyed by certain Indian industries. Both are held to be matters of extreme doubt by prominent Indian economists of the present

invested in railways and other activities. When they gained self-government they developed their industries with protective duties and other forms of State assistance. To-day India is in a period of transition. Till the end of the last century India imported nearly all her manufactured goods from the United Kingdom; now her import trade is shared by many other countries. Likewise her exports are also taken by a large number of foreign countries. The Ottawa agreements give a preference of 10 per cent on many articles coming from the United Kingdom to India and a corresponding preference on Indian articles shipped to Great Britain. Under this scheme the United Kingdom stands to gain a very large proportion of the additional market and India will have to impose an additional duty on non-British goods with a view to make good the loss on customs revenue from the import duties on British goods.

The Report of the Indian Delegation to Ottawa after discussing the relative advantages of the new arrangements as between the two countries, remarked that the only test of the value of the Agreement is the extent to which it results in an increase of the export trade of the countries concerned

primary interests of Indian agriculture The British capitalists have to make a sacrifice of the privileges they have enjoyed The only course open to them is to join hands with the Indian capitalists and thereby give India that co operation and support which she needs at present and not carry on the policy of exploitation of her raw materials and abundant natural resources which India must be allowed to retain for the benefit of her own economic advancement

Many people complain that economic realities in India are being sacrificed to political theories, but can it be gainsaid that an unfriendly India can do immense harm to British trade? Is it not also obvious that British business men and merchants in India have completely veered round in favour of constitutional progress in India as they are convinced that their very existence in the economic system and organization of that vast country will be endangered if political India becomes hostile to British trade and British business co operation? Recent experience in boycott years goes to show that if British trade suffers owing to lack of co-operation and support of India as a whole, not only will it lose its present hold of the Indian market, but it will also

day. We have to bear in mind the vital need of protecting the Indian agriculturist. I do not wish for a very rapid growth of Indian industries—the slower and steadier the pace with which they expand the better it will be for India's ultimate economic development. The promotion of industries may be regarded by some of our publicists as the first concern in our political programme, but India contains a population of which three-quarters are agriculturists. Unless and until the agricultural products find adequate and remunerative markets both in India and abroad and agriculture, finance and co-operative credit are developed on national lines, there will be little progress in the economic condition of the people.

It is easy to have a theoretical balance in the foreign trade of India by restricting imports with a protective tariff, thereby unduly pushing the development of industries on an inefficient basis which will hurt India's future industrial progress, and also by restricting exports of raw materials by export duties on the ground of their necessity for the development of indigenous industries. Conditions will change from day to day and the needs have to be studied and provided for, by a free and unfettered legislature in the

primary interests of Indian agriculture. The British capitalists have to make a sacrifice of the privileges they have enjoyed. The only course open to them is to join hands with the Indian capitalists and thereby give India that co-operation and support which she needs at present and not carry on the policy of exploitation of her raw materials and abundant natural resources which India must be allowed to retain for the benefit of her own economic advancement.

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gradually be wiped out by the keen competition of foreign countries, who will strive their utmost to establish friendly commercial relations with India. An outstanding example is the export of cotton goods from foreign countries to India which have advanced while those of Lancashire have fallen heavily. A friendly India could certainly satisfy a considerable portion of its exterior demands from the Lancashire mills. It stands to reason that free and friendly India would encourage British exports to India and yet may be able to keep a favourable balance of trade. Most politicians and business men in India are agreed that any commercial treaty with England must in the first place be for the economic benefit of India. How far does the Ottawa agreements serve this purpose? Will they eventually, even after the establishment of a Federal Constitution, prove mutually beneficial to both countries? After all, that is the crucial test in regard to all Fiscal compacts.

I am neither a Free Trader nor a Protectionist, and think it more practical to view these questions from an administrative rather than a theoretical standpoint. The economic evils of Europe to-day are serious enough in themselves and the Protectionist and the Free



Trader have their own specific points of view thereon which do not appear to the layman to afford any solution of the present difficulty. It is very significant that on the first day the Ottawa agreements came up for debate in the House of Commons there was a sudden collapse of the pound sterling. The agreements are not likely to make other European countries where economic distress and general economic unrest are more acute than they are within the British Empire, friendly towards England, and economic reprisals may well be within the range of possibility. In one of the reports of the Ottawa Conference hope was expressed that the agreements will be preliminary to an increase of trade not only within the Empire but also throughout the world. This seems to be optimistic, though trade agreements with some foreign countries have followed, but even these are criticized by Protectionists in England as being opposed to the spirit of the Ottawa Conference.

Another important factor to be emphasized is that England cannot maintain the supreme position in the world markets as a great manufacturing country, which she obtained through the development of her industries and through her mercantile marine during

the past hundred years. Most of the basic industries of England have their rivals in other countries. Iron and steel, textiles, hardware of all descriptions, railway and electric materials may be instanced. Hence the erection of tariff barriers against other countries for the protection of industries within the British Empire is not likely to help British industries as far as one can see; it may certainly help the Dominions and India. If these advantages are so great as to outweigh the disadvantages arising from the protective barriers erected against the other countries of the world, then there is some justification for the Ottawa policy.

No one wants English products as such. Other countries are on level with England in efficiency of industrial organization. Nay, in some respects countries such as Germany, America and Japan are superior to England in their modern and up-to-date industrial organization. So it is rather improbable that England will be able to sell her industrial manufactured goods to foreign countries to a greater extent under the Ottawa agreements than now. If this be so, where are the chances for economic improvement in England and reduction of unemployment amongst her people? If Britain cannot sell more, her

manufactures will languish ; she will not be able to maintain all her industries and the industrial organization that she has developed. Her agriculture is backward and she will need supplies for the requirements of her population of 44 millions from foreign countries, such as Denmark, outside the limits of the British Empire. This, indeed, is recognized in the recent trade agreements.

Moreover, England's currency depreciation may be deliberately engineered by foreign money markets so as to provide for the extra duties which she imposes on foreign imports. When manufacturers send their goods to England they will be able to pay the British price in pounds and pay the import duties under the Ottawa agreements without much difficulty. England built up her extensive Empire with Free Trade as her dominating policy, and applied the policy to India. The Princes of India were persuaded to remove their customs barriers and transit duties.

One of the most remarkable instances of this kind is the Cochin Interportal Trade Convention of 1863 which is still in force in the port of Cochin. According to that agreement His Highness the Maharajah agreed to abolish frontier custom houses and give up transit duties. He introduced the principle

of Free Trade at the instance of the British Government and granted certain facilities for British imports agreeing to share the moiety of customs derived from the Cochin Port with the British. When I put forward the proposal as Diwan of the State to build a harbour in Cochin so far back as 1911, I pointed out the unfairness of the agreement in many respects and the inherent right of the Cochin State to build a harbour in co-operation with the British Government, but retaining certain advantages which were her due by geographical position. At the time when the principle of Free Trade was imposed on Cochin to the detriment of her own revenues on payment of a permanent cash compensation, she had very little say in the matter.

Now that a Federal Constitution is in view and the Free Trade policy has been abandoned it is obvious that this and other similar agreements with ruling Princes will have to undergo revision, mainly on the ground of India's commercial and economic development as a whole, and the individual rights of the Indian States themselves which they certainly will not surrender. Previous agreements were entered into mainly to facilitate British trade with India. To hold the

balance even between Indian and British interests will be a matter of extreme difficulty, in the case of all States which have a sea-board like Cochin, Travancore and the Kathiawar maritime States. The Cochin case is especially interesting because the Indian States Inquiry Committee seemed to suggest that a condition of her entry into the Federation should be the surrender of part of her share of customs revenue in the port of Cochin. The memorandum submitted by the Cochin State regarding this matter is printed on page 163 of the Report of the Indian Round Table Conference (Third Session) from which I give the following extract :

“Historically the port belonged in its origin wholly to the State and for centuries the revenue derived from it has formed a substantial part of the State's income: geographically most of the port lies within undisputed State waters: politically the State enjoys its present share of the customs revenue under treaties and agreements: practically, it is impossible for the State to surrender the share of the customs revenue which it receives because that revenue is almost the only flexible source of income which the State possesses and to forgo it would be to surrender an essential means

of meeting the increased expenditure in which the further development of the port will itself involve the State. The surrender of the customs revenue would in fact almost certainly involve as a corollary the eventual termination of the existence of the State itself as a separate unit since the Government would not have at its disposal the means necessary for carrying on the administration. Anxious as His Highness the Maharajah and the people of Cochin are to join the Federation they would obviously have to hesitate to enter it on conditions which would necessitate the termination of the State's existence."

This case illustrates the difficulty of reconciling conflicting interests even if trade treaties and conventions between the British Government and Indian States remain as they are. Few maritime States will be ready to enter into the Federation if asked to sacrifice inherent rights in the way suggested by the Federal Finance Committee, namely, "that maritime States should retain at the most not more than the value of the duties of goods imported through their ports for consumption by their own subjects."

India sells about 40 per cent of her exports to the United Kingdom and the other Empire countries put together. The United King-

dom's share is about 25 per cent. Britain is India's best single purchaser, but all other countries put together buy from India three times as much. The pre-war average of imports into India from the United Kingdom was 62·8 per cent of her total imports. This ratio has been declining and at the time of the Ottawa Conference it stood at 35·4 per cent, thus showing that in two decades the United Kingdom's share went down from 63 per cent to 35·5 per cent. The figures show that non-Empire countries purchase 60 per cent of India's exports and also supply India with more than 50 per cent of her needs in imported manufactured goods. The Ottawa agreements will result in a decrease of India's import trade with foreign countries and the consumers will have to be taxed when the supply has to be made good by British imports which will be naturally dearer, or in the alternative buy foreign goods which will have to be charged a higher import duty to keep them out of competition with the British manufactured goods.

In a recent brochure Mr. Vakil, University Professor of Economics, Bombay, makes a detailed study of the implications of the Ottawa agreements. He comes to the conclusion that the maximum margin of additional trade

which the United Kingdom can capture is Rs.74·7 crores and out of this she will be able to take Rs.33·3 crores with the help of the proposed preference. He also shows that the extension of the export trade for India's products will be brought about by a diversion of our exports from other countries to the United Kingdom. But India is faced with the loss of markets in foreign countries and if such countries are unable to take her exports to the same extent as they do now, there will be a certain amount of economic friction. The most important conclusion of this expert economist is that India will continue to be a supplier of raw materials and will not develop industrially.

Another well-known economist, Mr. Sarkar, President of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, by independent inquiries and investigations has come to similar conclusions. He holds that the agreement will virtually destroy India's fiscal freedom and that she will not be able to negotiate trade agreements or preference with other countries. In support of the general Indian view that the Ottawa agreements will benefit British interests to a larger extent than Indian interests in the long run, the Bombay Indian Merchants' Chamber quotes the observation



of no less an authority than the President of the Board of Trade who declared in the House of Commons that the agreement will mean "an enormous increase in the activities of our houses exporting to India with a corresponding effect on manufacturing centres in the United Kingdom".

The Indian Delegation to Ottawa duly recognized the fact that a new Constitution was coming into being in India. In their report they stated :

"We were strongly of opinion that India ought not now, when the Constitution is in the melting-pot, to enter into an agreement which would limit the power of the new Government to shape its fiscal policy in accordance with its own conception of India's interests and of its place in the British Commonwealth of Nations."

What, however, are the prospects for any suitable readjustments in the economic relations of the two countries which are now determined by these agreements even when the Federal Constitution begins to function ? By the time this happens trade channels will be diverted and new commercial and trade conditions will be brought into being under this new principle of Imperial Preference, which till now India has deliberately rejected

as not being conducive to her interests. The only possible chance of an honourable settlement of the Indian problem apart from all political considerations seems to be the appointment of an impartial tribunal consisting of British and Indian experts and a few foreign experts from countries with which India at the present moment has a considerable amount of trade. This tribunal would investigate the whole question and suggest means and methods by which both countries may receive advantages in equal proportion as far as possible, after making such sacrifice of sentiment and material gains as may be needed to secure those advantages on a basis of absolute equality and partnership.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE OUTLOOK

**T**O-DAY the world is becoming more cosmopolitan, to use a familiar phrase : but world is cosmos and what belongs to the world should in nature be cosmopolitan. Time and space, through which history enacts the evolution and progress of nations, impose, however, a circumscribed limit to the human horizon. Hence we have a distinction between the ancient, medieval and modern culture as also a differentiation between East and West. If the highest mountain peak in the world can be conquered by air ; if the record of man's speed by land, air or water is to be constantly broken, it is evident that all geographical barriers which cause social, political and cultural conflicts as between nation and nation, must gradually disappear. Europe will no longer hold the supremacy as she has done since the commencement of the Christian era. Times change and with the cycle of ages and

civilizations, different parts of this earth manifest different forms of galvanic activity. What to-day is civilized will one day become a wilderness and vice versa. With the change in the tide of affairs of nations, history also repeats itself.

Many movements—political, economic and social—in the Western world to-day seem to be gravitating towards those essential doctrines of polity that have been preached by the ancient sages of the East. Europe is verging towards autocracy after having practised democracy and found it wanting. Asia is moving towards democracy after having been the victim of autocracy in all its forms for over two thousand years. Europe will be Asiatic in sentiment and Asia will be European in practice. If this is a correct picture of the dynamic forces that are breaking up Empires, and reconstructing new forms of government both in the East and the West, the question what is the future outlook for India may be put before inquiring readers who have perused the previous chapters. In India we have been lisping like an infant just learning the phrases taken from the dictionary of democracy, such as responsible government, dominion status, popular representation, all catch-

phrases moulding unconsciously the psychology of our younger generation. The sooner, however, Indians forget these terms which only make them go for the shadow rather than the substance, the better the chances for India's political and national salvation.

Under British tutelage for nearly a century and a half India has imbibed in her national psychology a love for British institutions and the British parliamentary system of Government. But England, in governing India, has had to part from the principle of British institutions and the system of Government which principally is, to quote Dicey, the supremacy or the rule of law which means absence of arbitrary power on the part of the Government. Commencing from the Regulation of 1816 whereby persons could be deported or imprisoned without trial, we come down to recent times to find that, as the ordinary judicial administration failed to cope with India's political crimes, she has been governed by Ordinance. Britain has thus departed from the rule of law which is characteristic of English institutions and followed the Continental system under which, to quote Dicey again, "in every Continental community the executive exercises far wider discretionary authority in the matter of

arrest, of temporary imprisonment and expulsion from the territory and the like than is either legally claimed, or in fact exerted, by the Government of England ”.

In that respect the Continent has really followed the 'true spirit of autocracy' of the East which we find still plays a part in the administration of Indian States where ruling Princes are representatives of despotism and have been known to use their discretionary authority in all the matters referred to in the above quotations. The ruling Princes within their territories ruthlessly use what they consider to be the prerogatives of the Crown and even to-day will not surrender such prerogatives which connote internal sovereignty. We in British India under the White Paper scheme will have a modified form of responsible government and we shall have in Indian India despotism of a kind. Between the two there should be a coalescence of ideals under the Federal scheme; but is that possible? Either British India will have to set up kingships to revert to a despotic form of government through the Princes and his Ministers to be chosen by himself, as is the case in all Indian States, advanced or backward—or the Indian States will gradually become demo-

cratic and the Princes will surrender their sovereignty or the prerogatives of their kingship to their subjects' representative institutions.

Writing of the revolutionary changes taking place in America, Mr. William K. Wallace in his latest book, *Our Obsolete Constitution*, says: "We have already gone beyond the Constitution; are being governed, so to speak, without a Constitution". In America a Constitution was framed to enable the Federal State to function, and "to guarantee the sovereignty, independence and exclusiveness of the United States". It has lasted a long time and whatever some Constitutionalists may think, it cannot be scrapped in a hurry nor will the American people ever take to violence to overthrow their present form of government, but they are looking askance at Europe. The British Parliament itself is regarded by some observers as having "lost its authority over the public mind and its influence upon events".<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wallace writes :

"We may at the same time register the degree of decline of parliamentary institutions in direct ratio to the usurpation of dictatorial powers by the executive in various

<sup>1</sup> A. G. Gardiner in the *Twilight of Parliament*.

European States. Mussolini in Italy, Horthy in Hungary, Pilsudski in Poland, Kemal in Turkey all illustrate different phases and degrees of the distrust of parliamentary Government. The fact that these men were able to assume dictatorial powers, bears witness not so much to their own strength as to the decrepitude of parliamentary institutions."

Many Britons, although nationally distrustful of all forms of dictatorship, hope for the advent of a dictator to set matters right in the British Empire. Bernard Shaw on more than one occasion has emphatically expressed his view that Parliament is obsolete, entirely unsuited to the work of the nation to-day and should be scrapped. The most recent instance of the encroachment of popular Government by autocratic authority is to be found in the Chancellorship of Hitler in Germany. In India we are claiming responsibility as understood in the British Constitution and have to reconcile this principle with the habit of mind and the psychology of the people that are associated with the autocratic form of Government generally prevailing in the East for centuries past.



The Moslem countries bordering Afghanistan are blending the two by giving quasi-representative institutions and retaining the full sovereignty of the King as a dictator. In China the Republic has attempted to weld together the enormous mass of humanity, disorganized, disunited and scattered over vast regions of territory but without success. The reason is not far to seek : in practising theoretical ideals of a republic, the Chinese people have been autocratic in the extreme through their military governors and there has not been that control issuing immediately from the people which determined and regulated all actions of the Chinese central Government.

The moral to be deduced from the state of the world, both East and West, is this : He would be a wise prophet indeed who could predict what shape the control of nations over their Governments will take in Europe and Asia during the next hundred years. For India the outlook, to my mind, is not without dark clouds looming on the horizon. With the impact of external forces on the decayed Hindu culture there will be a gradual break-up of the Hindu caste system and a great upheaval amongst the submerged tenth. On the other hand the political nationalism

of the Moslems in India will bring about an awakening amongst the whole Moslem population. These in their turn will, with the influence and example of Moslem empires outside India, consolidate themselves into a great force not entirely led by blind religious fanaticism. In the struggle that may ensue between exterior forces and internal groups, the evolution of Indian nationalism may take two opposite courses: one the Islamic and the other the proletariat, if I may use the word in a new sense, led by the future leaders of the Depressed Classes. The proletariat movement in India may find its inspiration from the East and if ever China is reconstructed or Japan conquers China and builds a Pan-Asiatic Empire, the Mongolian culture founded on Confucianism and Buddhism as distinguished from the Islamic, will invade Eastern India. The Mogul hordes representing the most predominant amongst the outside Moslem States and Kingdoms, again throwing themselves on the fertile plains of North-West India will, with the aid of Moslem Nationalism, found a new empire at Delhi, stirred by a new Pan-Islamism.

Thus, while the East will find a new Buddhist culture resuscitating, so to speak, the era of Asoka of the second century B.C., the West

will bring forth a new Akbar. Between the East and West of India there will be a clash of cultures and of peoples. In this prognosis ancient Hindu culture finds no place. Being a Hindu myself by birth, I may be considered unduly pessimistic, but let me explain. I believe in the birth of a new Hindu culture, holding with Keyserling "that cultures die when they are exhausted". This rebirth can only be determined by the powers of reconstruction which the leaders of Hindu society to-day may bring to bear on Hindu national life—reconstruction of the whole Hindu social and religious system. This, no doubt, is a herculean task, but if it is accomplished the Hindus as reorganized will lead India to her new destiny. In his book, *The World in the Making*, Keyserling foreshadows a new economic grouping amongst the nations under four main heads, namely, the European, Russian, Islamic and Anglo-Saxon. He prophetically suggests that within the individual great groupings there will be extreme tension. The Hindu race does not come within the purview of Keyserling's classification. Does this mean that he thinks the ancient Hindu culture will disappear altogether and be substituted for the Islamic culture in the whole of India?

If so, prophets of the future should indicate the possibility of a realization of the Pan-Islamic ideal in Asia. "If Europe is played out as the leading material power and the East is to become the carrier and symbol of materialism", we people of the East with any vision into the distant future may regard the Bolshevism of Russia as a possible invader and as 'an aggressive force in every sphere of life amongst Eastern peoples.

Having studied in Russia itself some of the recent manifestations of the Bolshevie ideals in administration, society, cultural developments, relation of the sexes and education of the people, I do not hold that every part of Bolshevie philosophy is to be condemned and as such viewed with horror. It is my conviction that the practical applications of this philosophy in the future history of Russia will undergo substantial changes. These will, in my judgment, be primarily adapted to the needs of the Orient rather than of the Occident. Further, I believe Bolshevism has a greater chance of securing a hold on the Moslem nations than on the Hindu peoples. If so, Neo-Hinduism in the future has a chance of asserting itself and yet bringing about that harmony, which

is the keynote of all Hindu conceptions of the Universe.

These problematic and somewhat metaphysical thoughts have no direct bearing on the Indian tangle which I have presented. But they lead one to question whether the national movements in India amongst all sections of her people and the policy of Great Britain set forth in the White Paper are likely to create forces that may work together to avert dangers of the future. It is easy to pick holes and play the rôle of a captious critic ; to emphasize difficulties and minimize honest attempts to solve them. I have not been guilty, I hope, of any of these things.

To me, in considering the future prosperity and well-being of India, the form which the new Constitution takes is immaterial. Whichever form is finally adopted will not please wholly any section of our people, nor will it satisfy some of the strongest elements in Great Britain. Everything will depend on the spirit with which it is initiated, and with which it is worked and the spirit shown by our people to change, modify and adapt it to their own traditions and their own natural genius. The Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament and the Indian delegates may, when they finish their labours, in their heart

of hearts echo the sentiment contained in the famous quatrain of Omar Khayyám :

“ Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument  
About it and about : but evermore  
Came out by the same Door as in I went.”

I may be asked, what is my idea of a bright future for the whole of India, or is there none in my mind ? The answer can be found in the previous chapters and may here be summarized :

No culture, ancient or modern, Eastern or Western, can ever hold India as one country under one political conception of government or of society for long. While the whole world is rent into factions and economic warfare, unity is essential for the safety and well-being of India's vast population which is one-fifth of the total population of the world. She has to look to the immediate needs of the present, and these are : a political truce with Great Britain ; an economic treaty with the British Empire, and, lastly, a great national effort to counteract the evil effects of communalism within.

These policies alone can hold different parts of India, Provinces and States, politically and economically together, at least for some time

to come. The first must be based on surrender of the British monopoly of control and the growth of autonomous Provinces and States, with full liberty to seek or not to seek British co-operation for administrative purposes. The second must also be based on liberty of action and the right of determining policy. Decision must be taken after conferences with the component parts of the Empire through responsible and not selected Ministers in an Imperial Parliament. The last can be achieved by a great social movement which may or may not be religious in sentiment. The Brahminical culture on which Hindu society is based is no longer a living force. Hindu society has to be reconstructed, leaving all the debris of the past behind. Let all social reforms come from within and not be superimposed by legislation. Communalism as a canker in the Indian body politic must be cured by national methods; British control and supervision will only perpetuate it. Above all, religious sentiment should be fostered in the educational system of the country; the large endowments available should be utilized for propaganda and demonstration by each religious group, with the principle of tolerance and mutual regard being maintained in all State and

State-aided institutions as an essential part of the curriculum.

Finally, the new Reform Act should be accepted by the Princes and peoples by means of a referendum. Those that wish to be excluded from its purview should be permitted to remain outside with the option of accession when they choose to exercise it. This applies to British Provinces as well as Indian States. Federation may thus begin by means of a nucleus of Federal units agreeing to the Constitution through the referendum, and no delay either in Federation or in provincial autonomy need therefore occur. If this policy and this procedure for direct action, both by Great Britain and India, is not adopted, the prospects for a happy and contented India as an integral part of the British Empire will be gloomy indeed, and events will work gradually towards India's ultimate disintegration.



## CHAPTER XV

### EPILOGUE

THE voluminous evidence taken by the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform between June 2 and August 4, 1933, when there was an adjournment for two months, has not led me to any material change in the opinions expressed in the foregoing chapters, which were written during the sittings of the Committee. The outstanding feature of the proceedings was the evidence of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, who was in the witness chair for forty hours, spread over nine days. He answered some two thousand questions, with more to come after the reassembling of the Committee early in October. As a result, the main outlines of the scheme are sharper and clearer, and in both countries estimates can be made of the maximum and minimum limits of further constitutional advance in the mind of H.M. Government. The British Indian delegates

have dispersed, and some of them will not be returning for the renewed discussions. The representatives of the States have played a useful part, but their responsibilities have been to their Rulers alone, who still sit on the fence taking their own time to make up their minds about the Federation.

The dangers of further delay are increasing, and it may be hoped that the inquiries of the Joint Select Committee will be concluded with all reasonable expedition. This hope is the stronger since Sir Samuel Hoare's masterly exposition of the White Paper through the nine days of his evidence should leave no doubt in the minds either of the British Diehard school or the extreme section of the Indian Nationalists, as to the intentions of the National Government. We can only hope that the report to be presented to Parliament will not, in the search for unanimity, be a document of paradoxes attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. The key to the situation is no doubt in the hands of the Princes, who can also solve the question of financial balance and stability. If they demand too much, they defeat the scheme; nor can they be denied their inherent claims to recognition of status on a just and equitable principle of sharing the burdens.

It is noteworthy that the Council of the European Associations and the Associated Chambers of Commerce are solidly behind the Government policy. The former "considers the White Paper scheme to be satisfactory as a whole and to form a reasonable basis on which to frame the future constitution of India". The Associated Chambers of Commerce in India have stated, with a definiteness far too lacking in responsible Indian opinion, that:

"The Chambers of Commerce who represented great industrial and commercial interests in India, interests which are vitally concerned in the future of the country, have after deliberate consideration decided to give support to the proposals of His Majesty's Government which in their opinion are those best calculated to achieve the common purpose of all shades of opinion in this country, namely that India should remain a contented partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations."

The main difficulty will be finance and a general agreement regarding safeguards and special responsibilities. As regards the former the States will not enter the Federation if Sir Malcolm Hailey's memorandum on the financial situation is to be taken as a sure guide and there are not marked improvements

in the economic situation. According to this document, "if the state of the world does not get better and commodity prices remain at their present level, maintenance of the existing system of Indian finances will be impossible, as will be the coming of Federation." In respect to safeguards, Sir Samuel Hoare explained that as time goes on the Governor-General and the Governors will have less and less reason to intervene in discharge of their special responsibilities, and the powers then will fall into desuetude, not because the powers are unnecessary, but because the Ministers themselves carry those powers into effect. If so, why define the powers so absolutely and categorically? The King of England never had at any time in English history his powers and prerogatives set forth clause by clause in the Constitution.

No one can foresee the outcome of these six years of discussion and the tangle is more complicated than ever. The only course open, to avert further travail and turmoil, is to get a scheme through as quickly as possible, to pave the way for the Federation, by establishing the Provinces on the new lines of autonomy and full responsibility. *Ad interim* legislation should foreshadow the

White Paper in its broad outlines, and be followed in due course by an enactment embracing the whole scheme as finally revised in the light of recent discussions. Between the two stages there will have been a sufficient interval to bring about as far as possible those conditions which are essential to the successful inauguration of an All India Federal structure. An attempt to build first at the top will make collapse inevitable. Bricks are not made without straw and, for some time to come, even when the Joint Select Committee has reported, adequate material will not be forthcoming for a complete structure.

THE END

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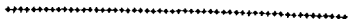


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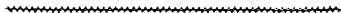
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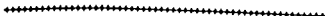
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